Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sept/Oct 2007 • $4.50/£2.50

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KṚṢṆA as KING

As a cowherd boy
or a head of state,
Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive.

ALSO:

The Vedic Observer

- What Is Life Worth?
- Soulful Science

Time Travel and Consciousness

Views from science and the Vedas

Inking with the Supreme

Are tattoos taboo?

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

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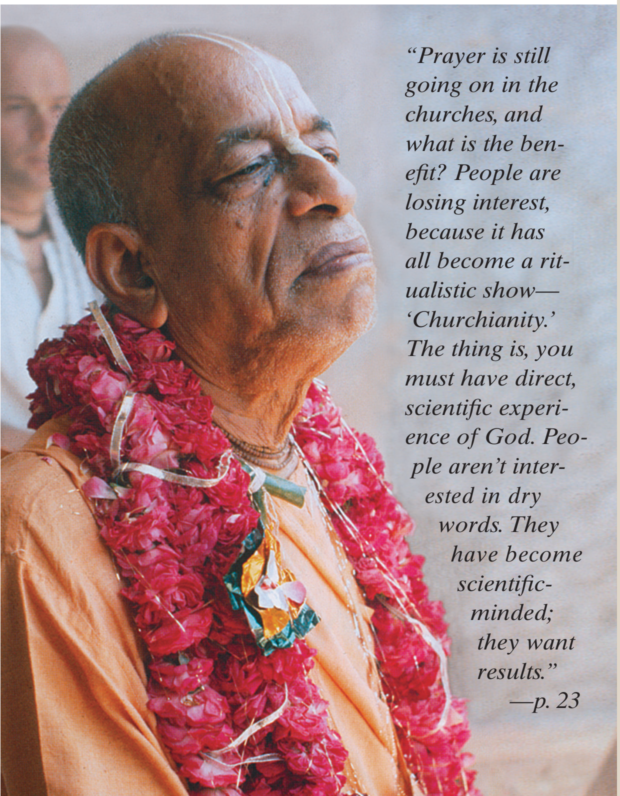
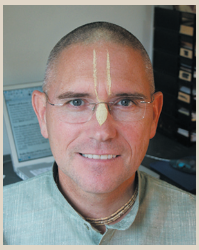
COVER Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is known as the speaker of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the sweet cowherd boy of Vṛndāvana village. But He's also a king, presiding over the supremely opulent city of Dvārakā. To read about Kṛṣṇa in His regal aspect, please see the article beginning on page 12. (Painting by Luz Marina Ramirez.)



> *"Prayer is still going on in the churches, and what is the benefit? People are losing interest, because it has all become a ritualistic show—'Churchianity.' The thing is, you must have direct, scientific experience of God. People aren't interested in dry words. They have become scientific-minded; they want results."*
> —*p. 23*

WELCOME



WHEN Śrīla Prabhupāda opened temples around the world, the Kṛṣṇa deities he installed were almost always accompanied by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort who resides with Him in a rural village. In Los Angeles, however, Prabhupāda named the deities Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa: Kṛṣṇa "the Lord of Dvārakā," along with His queen Rukmiṇī (a form of Rādhā). In this issue, Karuṇa Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī, a resident of New Dwaraka, the Los Angeles Hare Kṛṣṇa community, writes about Kṛṣṇa's endearing reign in His transcendental city.

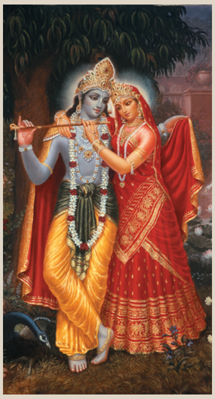
Dvārakā (Dwaraka) sits on the west coast of India. Another article in this issue takes us to the east-coast town of Jagannatha Puri, where Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Jagannātha has been worshiped for centuries. Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa, born and raised near Puri, explains why Lord Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa absorbed in His most intimate exchanges with His devotees.

The topic of tattoos may seem far removed from the culture of Dvārakā or Puri, but is it? BTG staff writer Madhava Smullen discusses Kṛṣṇa-related tattooing and its historical precedents. And, speaking of history, wouldn't it be nice to go back in time and see how things were done in a more cultured age? As Sadāputa Dāsa explains in "Time Travel and Consciousness," it might just be possible to do so.

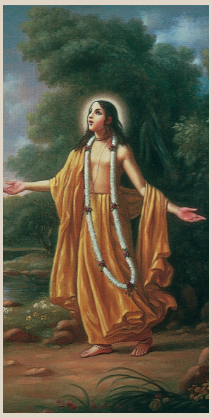
Hare Kṛṣṇa—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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Letters

Spiritual Support From Science

What a great article by Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa ("When Science Points to Spirituality," May/June). I especially appreciated his very powerful point that humans are the only rogue species to negatively affect the symbiotic balance of life. His effective analogy of the misused Mercedes car also drove home the point that the higher human potential is optimally fulfilled only by spiritual education, fostering self-restraint. And he further strengthens this essential message with solid corroboration from many relevant scientific findings, to further illustrate the rampant ill effects of our spiritual ignorance.

Thank you for a job well-done in so skillfully reminding us all of our irrevocable dependence on our benevolent Lord's natural technology, and His higher plan for our possible entrance into His eternal service.

Gokulānanda Dāsa
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Religions and Relationships with God

I remember Śrīla Prabhupāda discussing one of the questions you addressed in the Letters section of the July/August 2007 issue—"The Only Way?" The writer asks, "Why are there so many religions?" While I definitely agree with the answer given by Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa, I remember Śrīla Prabhupāda explaining that the many religions are created around peoples' relationships to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. These many relationships also explain why these different religions call the Supreme Personality by different names. For example, when I was a public school teacher in a position of authority I was addressed as Mr. Brugalette. My nondevotee friends, who knew me on a more personal level, addressed me as Phillip, and my devotee friends, who were even closer, call me by my initiated name, Padmanābha Dāsa. Of course, my immediate family, who has the most intimate relationship with me, calls me by names that no one else uses, the nicknames Padma or Pad.

This example explains why most people know Kṛṣṇa as "God"—the giant, bearded authority figure who hands down rewards and punishments like a teacher or a company boss. That's the relationship they have with Him. If you look at the different names the various religions have for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is easy to compare these names with very specific relationships. Of course, by Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy, we have been introduced to Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy—the most intimate relationship.

Padmanābha Dāsa
Lake Forest Park, Washington

Who Caused The "First Cause"?

My friend is an atheist and a strong believer in science. Arguing in favor of God's existence, I pointed him to the various marvels, intricacies, and complexities of earth and even the universe and questioned what their cause could have been. While he had no answer, he did build on my own. He said that if God was the cause of everything, who is God's cause? "Why can't there be a cyclical chain of causes or an infinite number of causes? To apply a universal theory of causation and then suddenly stop it at the 'First Cause' is inconsistent."

How can we use the argument that everything should have a cause, and then say that these causes should just stop at one point (i.e., Kṛṣṇa)? How does that make sense?

Our reply: Consciousness is an eternal reality. Everything is produced from the supreme consciousness. The supreme consciousness has no cause. Where does your friend say consciousness comes from? If the brain produces it, what is it about the brain that does so? Under what conditions is consciousness produced? Can you make a conscious machine?

Scientists have not explained consciousness, but the Vedic literature offers a whole science of consciousness. The phenomenal world emanates from the supreme consciousness, Kṛṣṇa. Both Kṛṣṇa and we souls, who are part of Kṛṣṇa, are eternal. We are not material products caused by other material products.

It is not unreasonable to say that there is a first cause. With our imperfect senses, we can trace causes back only so far, and thus we cannot tell whether there is or is not a first cause. So a first cause is possible.

The important point is that the *Vedas* teach that consciousness is the source of matter, not that matter is the source of consciousness. It is difficult to explain how matter could produce consciousness, so it is possible that consciousness is an irreducible principle, as the *Vedas* say it is.

On the other hand, how can your friend prove that there is an infinite number of causes or a cycle of causes? Proposing a theory and offering no evidence to support it is completely unscientific. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is scientific because by performing devotional service you can realize Kṛṣṇa, but your friend's speculation cannot be demonstrated. It is merely a guess and should not be presumed to be accurate.

Gurukulis and Initiation

Regarding the article "Kuli Mela: The Turning Point" (May/June), I am very happy to realize there is a big ground swell of enthusiasm amongst the children and grandchildren of Śrīla Prabhupāda's original devotees. For me, taking initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda (in the early seventies) was the most important turning point in my life and has shaped and given meaning to everything I have done since then. I just hope these *gurukulis* realize what formal initiation has to offer. This is how one links with the disciplic succession and, ultimately, Kṛṣṇa. There is also the sweet relationship with one's guru to consider. If anyone is looking for direction, or meaning, or whatever, this is what the guru has to offer.

Vāninātha Dāsa Brahmacārī
Goodyear, Arizona

Thanks to a BTG Sponsor

We'd like to thank Mukesh Khatri, his wife Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanā Devī Dāsī, and their daughters Kruti and Jinnie for their generosity in providing our small devotee community with a BTG for every family and many visitors—every issue for many years now. It means a lot to us because BTG is always an invaluable source of inspiration and helps to keep us in touch with the ISKCON world at our somewhat isolated island in the Pacific. Our heartfelt gratitude for their services.

Devotees at ISKCON
Taipei, Taiwan

Reply was written by Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. E-mail: editors@krishna.com.

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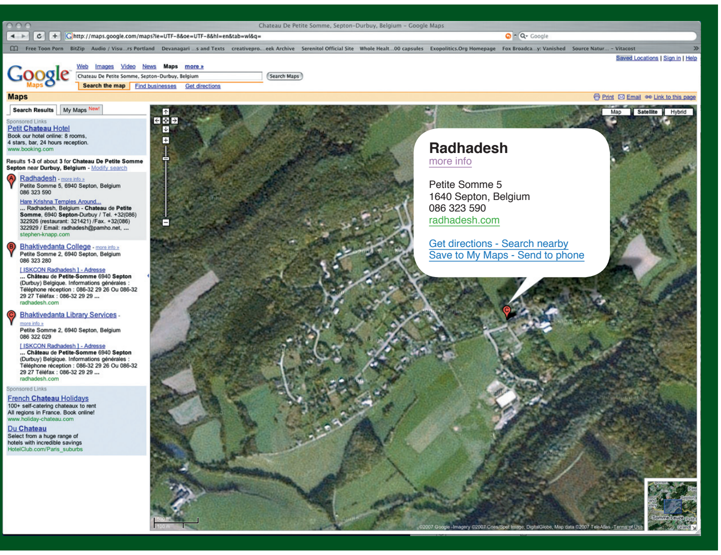
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FOUNDER'S LECTURE

London—July 19, 1973

WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOR

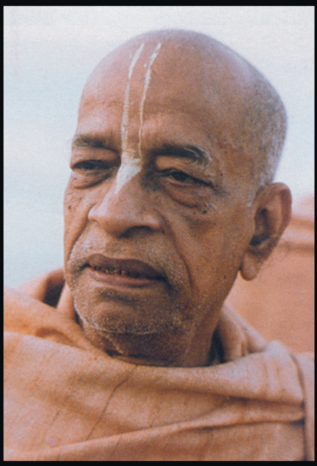
We've already determined our happiness and distress in this life by our actions in previous lives and should now pursue only spiritual goals.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'haṁ
ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher
yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

"Let me see those who have come here to fight, wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra."
—*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.23



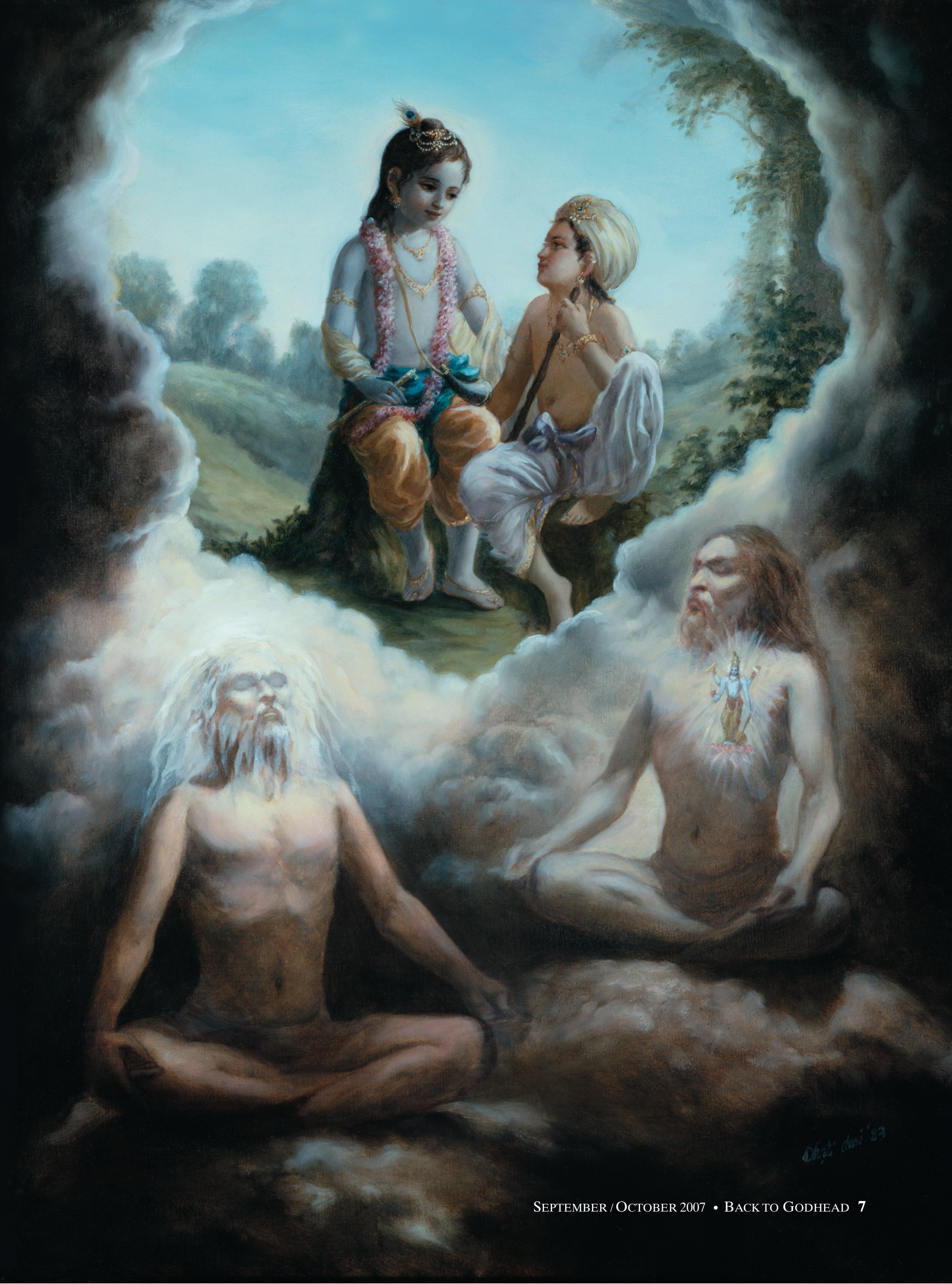
TO USURP others' property is to be *durbuddhi,* mischievous. Why should one encroach upon others' property? That is not good. *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam* [*Īśopaniṣad,* Mantra 1]. This is the Vedic instruction: "Accept only what is given to you. Don't encroach upon others' property." That is the key to peace.

Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. So whatever Kṛṣṇa gives you as *prasādam,* as His favor, accept it and be satisfied. This is the basic principle of peace in the world. But because people are not educated in that way, everyone wants more and more and more and more. There is no satisfaction. That is *durbuddhi.*

The Vedic culture says, "Be satisfied with your position." There is no question of starving in any position of life. People are pursuing economic development, but according to *śāstra,* scripture, it is not possible to develop your economic position simply by endeavor. You are destined to have a mixture of happiness and distress. That is the nature of things.

There are four principles of human activity. The first is dharma. Dharma means to abide by the orders of the Supreme. But people do not know who the Supreme is and what His order is, so what kind of religion are they following? They accept dharma as a superfluous faith only. But that is not dharma, religion. Dharma means to abide by the orders of the Supreme. That is

Right: Lord Kṛṣṇa rewards the jñānī *(philosopher) with realization of His all-pervasive energy* (brahman), *the yogi with realization of His feature as the Supersoul in the heart, and the devotee with realization of His original transcendental form.*



Dhṛti devi '83

the meaning of dharma: obedience to God. People have no conception of God, and what to speak of obedience. But this is the simple meaning of religion: obedience to God. That's all, three words.

God is the supreme proprietor and maintainer. Therefore we are maintained, we are predominated, we are the servants, and we should remain obedient to God. That is religion. Where is the difficulty? Unfortunately, people do not know what God is, what His command is, what religion is. They manufacture ideas. And because they do not know the simple process, they are called *durbuddhi,* not very intelligent, or rascals.

People do not know what God is, what His command is, what religion is. They manufacture ideas.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa plainly calls such persons *mūḍhas. Mūḍha* means ass, rascal. One who does not know his own interest is called *mūḍha,* ass. In India the ass carries tons of cloth on his back all day. Not a piece of the cloth belongs to him. And he is working so hard only for a morsel of grass, which is available everywhere. But he is thinking, "This gentleman, the washerman, is giving me food." Food is available anywhere and everywhere, but he is thinking like that and working so hard.

Karmīs, nondevotees, are like that. A man will eat two *chapatis* or four *chapatis,* but he is working day and night. If you want to see him, he will say, "Oh, I have no time." He never thinks, "I am interested in eating four *chapatis,* which are very easily available. So why I am working so hard?" That sense does not come to him. He is working, working, working. "More money, more money, more money, more money, more money."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says, "No, that is not your business. The four *chapatis* are already destined to you; you will get them in any circumstances. Don't waste your time under some false impression of economic development. You cannot get more; you cannot get less. Your quota is already there. So use your time to understand Kṛṣṇa. That is your business."

Our Real Business

But people will not accept this. "Oh, this is a waste of time. Attending the class on *Bhagavad-gītā* is a waste of time. During that time I could earn hundreds of dollars." That is their business. That is called *durbuddhi,* not very intelligent. All *mūḍhas,* asses.

The real intelligent person is he who is satisfied with what Kṛṣṇa has given him: "If Kṛṣṇa wants, He will give me more. Let me become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Let me study about Kṛṣṇa. Let me chant about Kṛṣṇa. Let me hear about Kṛṣṇa. Let me see the deity of Kṛṣṇa. Let me engage my hands in worshiping Kṛṣṇa and cleansing the temple. Let my legs be engaged in going to the temple." In this way all our senses should be engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa. That is our real business.

tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad bhramatām upary adhaḥ
tal labhyate duḥkhavad anyataḥ sukhaṁ
kālena sarvatra gabhīra-raṁhasā

"Persons who are actually intelligent and philosophically inclined should endeavor only for that purposeful end which is not obtainable even by wandering from the topmost planet [Brahmaloka] down to the lowest planet [Pātāla]. As far as happiness derived from sense enjoyment is concerned, it can be obtained automatically in course of time, just as in course of time we obtain miseries even though we do not desire them." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.18] *Tasyaiva hetoḥ:* "For that purpose only." Which purpose? That purpose which we could not achieve after wandering up and down the universe. The living entity is wandering by transmigration from one body to another up and down the universe. Sometimes, by pious activities, we become a *deva,* such as Brahmā, Indra, or Candra. And by impious activities, we can go down to become a worm in stool. This is going on.

Who goes to the upper planetary systems? Qualified *brāhmaṇas* who strictly follow religious principles. Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ
kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca
jñānaṁ vijñānam āstikyaṁ
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam

"Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and religiousness—these are the natural qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.42] *Vijñānam* means practical application of knowledge in life. Knowledge alone is useless. You must practically apply the knowledge in your life. Science students are tested in theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. "So much hydrogen and oxygen makes water." That is theoretical. But when you mix hydrogen and oxygen gas and actually prepare water, that is practical. Science means that theoretical knowledge is not sufficient. Science means observation and experiment, or experimental knowledge. That is called *vijñānam.*

By practical knowledge you should be well acquainted with God. That is the *brāhmaṇa's* business. Kṛṣṇa says *ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthāḥ:* those who strictly follow the brahminical principles will be situated in the upper planetary system. [Bg. 14.18] But a Vaiṣṇava is above such persons. *Yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām.* [Bg. 9.25] Those who follow these principles with an aim for higher planetary systems can be elevated. Similarly, those who try to go back home, back to Kṛṣṇa, can go there.

Know Kṛṣṇa "in Truth"

The purpose of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to help people to go back home, back to Kṛṣṇa. That is not very difficult. Kṛṣṇa says,

janma karma ca me divyam
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities, does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." [Bg. 4.9] Try to understand Kṛṣṇa in truth, not vaguely. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You think of God, so why don't you accept Kṛṣṇa? He says that He is God, and the *śāstras,* the *ācāryas,* Vyāsadeva, Nārada, your guru—all say that He is God. Why not accept? Why search after some other God? Here is God. His name, address, activities—everything is there in the authorized statements of the *Vedas.*

Is there any difficulty in understanding Kṛṣṇa? But a rascal will not accept Him. "Why should I accept Kṛṣṇa? I have manufactured my own God." That is his misfortune, *durbhaga.* Or *durbuddhi:* he is a miscreant rascal. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.15):

na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsuraṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ

"Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons do not surrender unto Me." These are the persons who do not surrender to Kṛṣṇa: miscreants, the mischievous, the sinful, rascals, asses, the lowest of mankind. They are all *durbuddhi.*

Human life is an opportunity to understand Kṛṣṇa. *Hari hari biphale janama goṅāinu, manuṣya-janama pāiyā, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nā bhajiyā, jāniyā śuniyā biṣa khāinu.* This is a song by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. "O Lord Hari, I have spent my life uselessly. Having obtained a human birth and having not worshiped Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, I have knowingly drunk poison." Anyone who is not trying to understand Kṛṣṇa—what to speak of worshiping Him, giving Him service—is wasting his life. Kṛṣṇa says that simply by trying to know Him one becomes liberated. Even if one doesn't know Him perfectly but is simply trying to know Him, that very activity will make him liberated.

It is not possible to understand Kṛṣṇa. He is so great, unlimited. How we can understand Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa cannot understand Himself. Or Ananta, His direct servant, cannot understand Him. That is a fact. We cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. But still, if we accept whatever Kṛṣṇa says about Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* then we immediately become fit to go back to Godhead, back home. *Janma karma ca me divyaṁ evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ* [Bg. 4.9]. *Tattvataḥ* means "in truth."

Levels of Perfection

Even *siddhas,* those who are perfect, cannot understand Kṛṣṇa.

manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānāṁ
kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ

"Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who achieve perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth." [Bg. 7.3]

"Perfect" here means not spiritually perfect but materially perfect

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

or partially spiritually perfect. *Brahma-jñānīs,* those who have realized the impersonal Brahman, are partially perfect. *Paramātmā-jñānīs,* yogis who have realized the Supersoul, are also partially perfect. Only devotees are completely perfect. *Brahma-jñānīs* are partially perfect because they can understand the eternity portion of the Supreme Lord. That knowledge is called *brahma-jñāna.* And *paramātmā-jñāna* is knowledge of—or personally seeing—God as the four-handed Viṣṇu. That is also imperfect knowledge.

When one comes to know Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead, that is perfect knowledge. Because when one comes to the understanding of personal God, there is *ānanda,* bliss. In other features there is no *ānanda.* There is eternity, there is knowledge, but there is no *ānanda.*

The *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.12) says, *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt:* We are by nature *ānanda,* bliss. Therefore we search after *ānanda,* but we do not know where to get it. We try to get bliss in the material world by eating meat, drinking wine, sex. But that is not *ānanda. Ānanda* is *satyānanda,* real bliss. Material pleasures are flickering, lasting for a few minutes or a few hours. That is not *ānanda. Ānanda* means *satyānanda,* real *ānanda.* What is that real *ānanda*? *Brahma-sukha.* That *ānanda* is in exchange with the Supreme Brahman. It is unlimited *ānanda.*

In the *Śata-nāma-stotra* of Lord Rāma it is said, *ramante yoginaḥ anante:* "Yogis enjoy unlimited-pleasure." Kṛṣṇa is unlimited. When you join with Kṛṣṇa in His *rāsa* dance as a *gopī,* or play with Him as a cowherd boy, or become like His father Nanda or mother Yaśodā, or become His servant, or become water like the Yamunā, or the land of Vṛndāvana, or trees or fruits or flowers or cows or calves in Vṛndāvana—then you get real *ānanda.* The *Bhāgavatam* describes how Kṛṣṇa's associates enjoy life. Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "These boys who are playing with Kṛṣṇa, oh, they are not ordinary boys." *Kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ:* "They have amassed the effects of pious activities for millions and trillions of births. Now they have come to play with Kṛṣṇa."

The Perfect Opportunity

That opportunity is there in *bhakti-yoga.* Kṛṣṇa is anxious to take you back. Why are you wasting time? Why are you preoccupied with economic development? What economic development can you do? You cannot get more than what is destined to you. That is not possible. If it were possible, everyone would be prominent, educated, beautiful. But opulence comes from pious activities. Birth in a very high family, wealth, education, beauty—these are the effects of pious activities. And the effects of impious activities are the opposite.

In either case the effects are material and destined. You cannot change what you have gotten by pious or impious activities. That is not possible. But you can change your position by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other things you cannot change. If you are white, you cannot become black, or if you are black, you cannot become white. That is not possible. But you can become a first-class Kṛṣṇa conscious person. Whether you are black or white, it doesn't matter. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Therefore our endeavor should be to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Other things we cannot change. That is not possible. Whatever you are destined to get you will get. Don't bother with so-called economic development. As for food, Kṛṣṇa is supplying even to cats and dogs and ants. Why not you? There is no need of bothering Kṛṣṇa: "God, give us our daily bread." He will give you. Don't bother.

Try to become a very faithful servant of God. "Oh, God has given me so many things. So let me give my energy to serve Kṛṣṇa." That is required. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "I have taken so much, life after life, from Kṛṣṇa. Now let me dedicate this life to Kṛṣṇa. I will not let this life pass uselessly like cats and dogs. Let me use it for Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Thank you very much.

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Abs ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

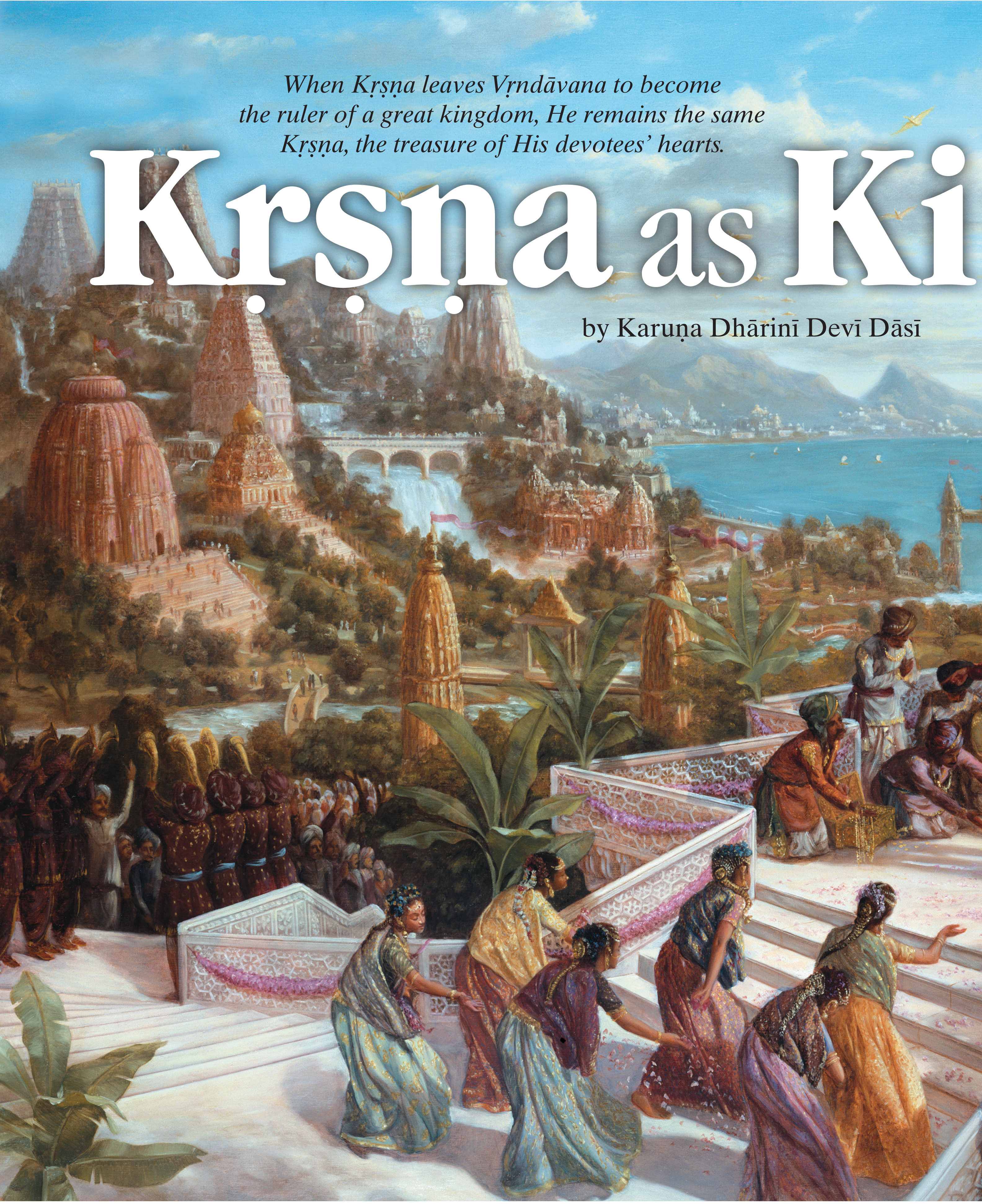
Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

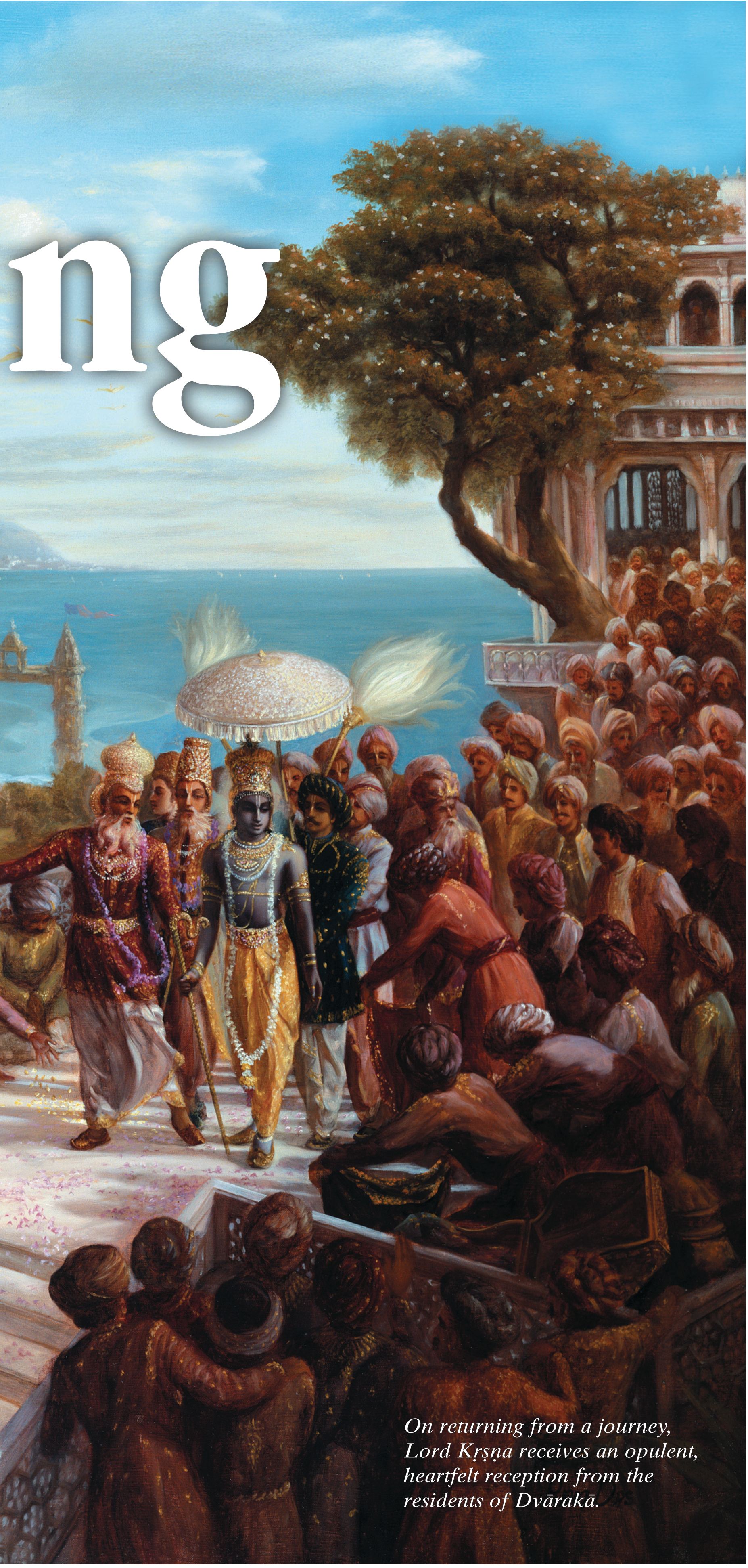
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.



When Kṛṣṇa leaves Vṛndāvana to become the ruler of a great kingdom, He remains the same Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of His devotees' hearts.

Kṛṣṇa as Ki

by Karuṇa Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī



On returning from a journey, Lord Kṛṣṇa receives an opulent, heartfelt reception from the residents of Dvārakā.

Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa

THE KṚṢṆA DEITY worshiped at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Los Angeles, where I live, is named Dvārakādhīśa, "the Lord of Dvārakā." Dvārakā is the pristine island Lord Kṛṣṇa rules in His adult years.* Generally devotees of Kṛṣṇa think of Him primarily as the Supreme Personality of Godhead who performs wonderful spiritual pastimes in the cowherd village of Vṛndāvana and speaks the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In that rural setting, He plays and enjoys life among many relatives and friends. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, or followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, know that Kṛṣṇa as a cowherd boy exchanges the most intimate feelings with His devotees. Still, Kṛṣṇa is always Kṛṣṇa, and devotees love Him when He displays Himself in other ways as well. For example, He is also endearing in His role as Dvārakādhīśa.

Kṛṣṇa is no ordinary ruler. Kings or presidents represent what is grand and powerful in this world. Yet even the finest and most awesome personality is only a small indication of the opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His very body is constituted of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

Though Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa enjoys many sporting battles, He has no one to conquer and nothing to achieve, being always complete in Himself. He always knows exactly what to do in His regal duties in relationship to His citizens, ministers, and soldiers. His brows are never furrowed with the anxiety of diplomatic responsibilities.

Though Kṛṣṇa rules as an adult, He is in fact *nava yauvanam,* eternally youthful. According to *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta,* by Sanātana Gosvāmī, the king of Dvārakā has "all of the beauty of youth made even sweeter by traces of childlike innocence."

As a ruler, Dvārakādhīśa has only the best of motives. His only objective is to defeat demoniac influences and protect His surrendered, pure devotees. His authority is original and

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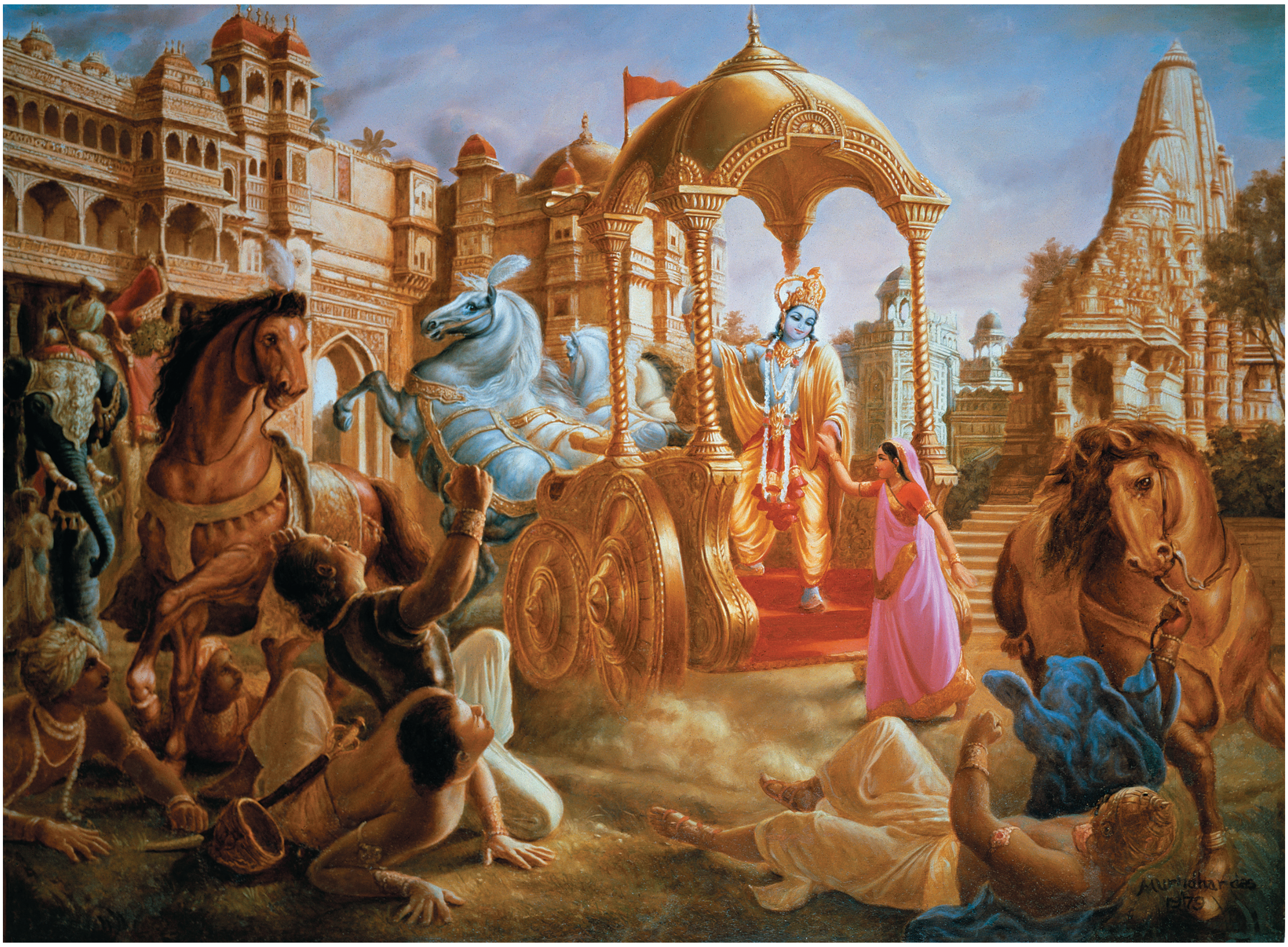
*Although Kṛṣṇa lived in Dvārakā when He was present on earth five thousand years ago, Dvārakā exists eternally in the spiritual world. Therefore, in this article I'll sometimes use the present tense when referring to Dvārakā and Kṛṣṇa's activities there.



Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Following the tradition of royalty, Lord Kṛṣṇa kidnaps Princess Rukmiṇī (on her request) to take her as His wife.

inexhaustible. To obey His authority is the primary nature of every living being.

An Extraordinary Kingdom

Śrīla Prabhupāda's book *Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Personality of Godhead* describes Dvārakā as the most superb and beautiful city in the history of the world. The island of Dvārakā is decorated with 900,000 extraordinary mansions built of first-class marble, with gates and doors made of silver and jewels. The clear blue-green ocean lies on all sides. The residents of the mansions, all pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa, are of very fine beauty.

Dvārakā's innumerable gardens and parks are full of a variety of sweet, colorful flowers, and orchards abound with an array of fruit. Beautiful chirping birds, intoxicated peacocks, and ponds filled with lilies and lotuses delight the senses. The residents decorate every lane and walkway with water pots, festoons, banana trees, and fragrant flowers, just in anticipation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's strolling there.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* describes, "The servitors in the abode of Dvārakā always worship Kṛṣṇa as the most respectable and revered Personality of Godhead. They are captivated by Kṛṣṇa because of His superexcellent opulences."

From *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* we learn that although Dvārakādhīśa is truly the absolutely powerful king of kings, enjoying in all opulence, He is also humble, friendly, and full of unlimited love. His devotees, in a mood of ecstatic servitude, awe, and reverence, are absorbed in loving sentiments for their Lord.

One such devotee is Śrī Rukmiṇī, the most exalted feminine personality, the Lord's principal queen. She is an expansion of God's pleasure potency, so she is God incarnate in female form, full of every feminine grace and virtue possible. She exhibits exquisite beauty specially designed to please the Lord of Dvārakā.

Śrī Rukmiṇī is always fully satisfied with Her Lord and submissive to Him. She understands His every mood and keeps within her heart the details of His childhood and youth. Although hundreds of qualified maidservants attend to His every need, She fans Him Herself, holding the snow-white *cāmara* in her young bejeweled hand. Jealousy and anger never beset her.

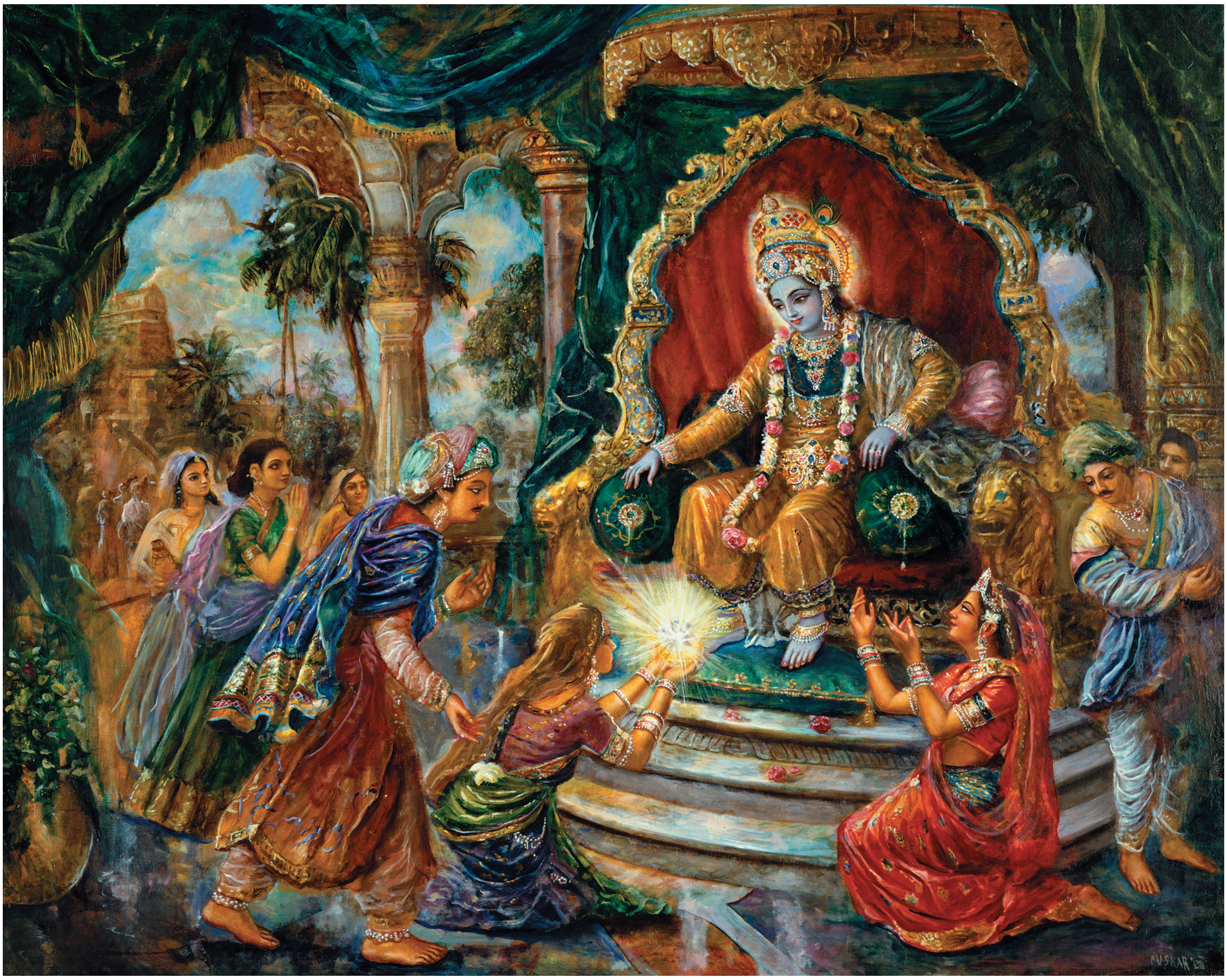
An Extraordinary King

In His youth, Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana and traveled to the city of Mathurā, where He assumed His leadership role in the Yādava dynasty. He fought with and killed the most feared despot of His time, Kaṁsa, and released His parents from Kaṁsa's prison. He then built a fort on the island of Dvārakā and transferred all of the citizens of Mathurā there to protect them from the attacks of Kaṁsa's ruthless relatives who sought revenge.

Shortly thereafter Lord Kṛṣṇa kidnapped His queen, the young princess Rukmiṇī. Her brother had arranged a marriage for her as part of a political alliance. But she only wanted Kṛṣṇa as her husband, so she requested Him, through a messenger, to come to her aid. Kidnapping a princess was common for kings in those days, but Kṛṣṇa did this single-handedly against an army of angry, heroic princes. Kṛṣṇa took the hand of many other superbly beautiful, opulent princesses in various daring ways. He rescued 16,000 princesses being held captive by the cruel king Bhaumāsura. He married every one of them and provided each a royal palace on the island of Dvārakā. For many hopeful lifetimes of penance and austerity they had prayed for Kṛṣṇa's favor upon them.

The Nectar of Devotion states, "While Kṛṣṇa was living in Dvārakā, He expanded Himself into 16,108 forms, and each and every expansion resided in a palace with a queen. Not only was Kṛṣṇa happily living with His queens in those palaces, but He gave in charity from each palace an aggregate number of 13,054 cows completely decorated with nice clothing and ornaments daily. This means that 13,054 multiplied by 16,108 cows were being given in charity by Kṛṣṇa every day. That was the system of Kṛṣṇa's daily affairs while He was living in Dvārakā."

Many amazing battles took place between Kṛṣṇa and a variety of rival demoniac kings. King Jarāsandha, Kaṁsa's father-in-law, attacked Dvārakā with numerous military phalanxes consisting of tens of thousands of chariots, horses, elephants, and soldiers. Kṛṣṇa observed the immense strength of Jarāsandha, which looked like an ocean about to cover a beach at any moment. He thought about the situation and His mission to rid the world of demoniac influences, so He took this opportunity to face and destroy the military phalanxes.


Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa

Satyabhāmā returns the syamantaka *jewel to Kṛṣṇa, who will soon become her husband.*

New Dwaraka

ONE OF THE first Hare Kṛṣṇa centers in the Los Angeles area was a large apartment in Hollywood. Complaints from neighbors about the loud *kīrtanas* and the smell of spicy cooking, however, forced the devotees to vacate. They scattered throughout Los Angeles but continued to hold meetings in garages. Because many guests were attending, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked his disciples to find a suitable temple.

Eventually ISKCON bought a large church with adjacent service buildings on Watseka Avenue. After nearby apartment buildings were bought, Śrīla Prabhupāda named the community "New Dwaraka."

At the installation ceremony of the temple deities, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave an inspiring lecture: "The real thing is *bhakti.* What can you offer to Kṛṣṇa? Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. What have you got? What is your value? And what is the value of your things? It is nothing. The real thing is your feeling. 'Kṛṣṇa, kindly take it. I have no qualification. I am most rotten, fallen, but I have brought this thing for you, please take it.'"

As he spoke, Śrīla Prabhupāda's voice broke like a wave of strong love on the shore of his deep humility.

Prabhupāda's disciples asked if they could call the deities Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa, and he consented.

Of the ten years Prabhupāda spent traveling, preaching, and opening temples throughout the world, he spent two in New Dwaraka. There he wrote his summary study of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Nectar of Devotion*) and developed and wrote much of *Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Personality of Godhead,* both of which feature elaborate descriptions of the Lord's pastimes as king of Dvārakā.

Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādiśa in Los Angeles

Nearly forty years later, New Dwaraka still functions in much the same way that Prabhupāda set for it, with a full program of deity worship, book and *prasādam* distribution, and public *kīrtanas.*

Subsequently Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's brother, arrested Jarāsandha. Kṛṣṇa feigned compassion for Jarāsandha and had him released, but He had a plan: Jarāsandha would in the future besiege the city of Mathurā seventeen times, and each time Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would be able to destroy hundreds of thousands of demoniac soldiers. Jarāsandha himself was eventually defeated in a fight with Kṛṣṇa's cousin Bhīmasena.

The Syamantaka Jewel And Other Episodes

Because of intrigue involving a jewel known as Syamantaka, Kṛṣṇa was once wrongly defamed. The Syamantaka could produce gold by its mystic power. Many people coveted the jewel, and when it was missing, some people accused Kṛṣṇa of stealing it. The jewel was actually in the hands of persons who could not properly take care of it and were almost driven mad by its potency. One citizen finally surrendered both the jewel and his daughter to Kṛṣṇa, having come to realize that all valuable things are the measure of Kṛṣṇa's benevolence and should be offered in His service.

One crazy rival named Paundraka was so jealous of the superexcellent qualities of Kṛṣṇa that he became convinced that he himself was Kṛṣṇa. He set out to defeat Dvārakādhīśa by donning an extra set of arms and carrying imitation weapons only wielded by Viṣṇu Himself. Declaring himself to be God, he set out to kill the Lord. Eventually Kṛṣṇa beheaded Paundraka, who achieved liberation for having meditated so intensely on the Personality of Godhead in his meager attempt to be Him.

Lord Dvārakādhīśa's fellow king and cousin Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira once held a great sacrifice, which included a ceremony to honor the best person in attendance. Although Kṛṣṇa was posing as an ordinary king, Yudhiṣṭhira adored Him as none other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and so he selected Him to be honored and worshiped in the ceremony. But Kṛṣṇa's envious cousin Śiśupāla disagreed with Yudhiṣṭhira's decision and berated Kṛṣṇa, who eventually cut off Śiśupāla's head with His disc and allowed Śiśupāla's soul to merge into His own body.

During Dvārakādhīśa's reign, part of His mission was to enthrone His great devotee Yudhiṣṭhira, religion incarnate, as emperor of the world. The Lord of Dvārakā acted as a peace messenger on Yudhiṣṭhira's behalf to try to prevent the war with the ill-motivated Kurus. When negotiations failed, Yudhiṣṭhira's brother Arjuna employed the Lord as his chariot driver in the battle. At that time, Lord Kṛṣṇa, His head adorned with a golden helmet, spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna to enlighten him (and us) and encourage him in the fight. The Lord was fully capable of fighting the battle and winning it at once for Arjuna. But He wanted to serve and glorify His devotee Arjuna by engaging him to fight as a matter of Kṛṣṇa conscious duty.

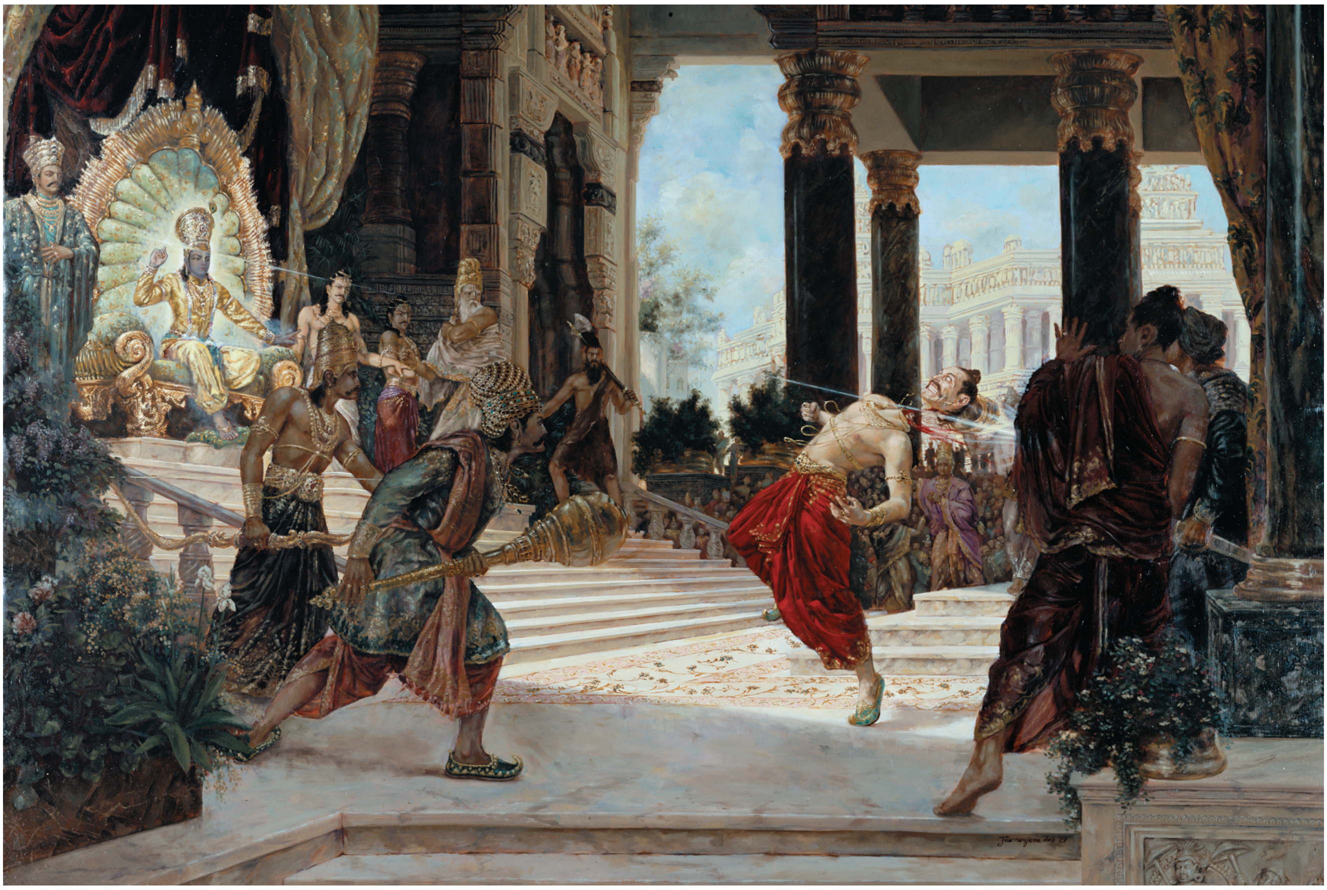
Most Amazing Events

If Kṛṣṇa's reign as a king seems full of amazing events, just consider how amazing He seems to His reverent, respectful servants at Dvārakā. They are often surprised by His unpredictability. They remember when Sudāmā, Kṛṣṇa's friend from His school days, came to visit. Kṛṣṇa's guards and wives witnessed what looked like a homeless person going into the Lord's rooms unchecked. To their wonder they saw how Kṛṣṇa reacted with spontaneous love at the sight of His dear old friend.

Though Sudāmā was very thin and dressed in shabby cloth, Dvārakādhīśa embraced him, sat him down on His own bed, and bathed his feet while Rukmiṇī fanned him. When Sudāmā shyly offered Kṛṣṇa his only possession, a bag of plain dried rice, Dvārakā's queens observed with amazement the way the Lord took the rice as though it was the most irresistible gift.

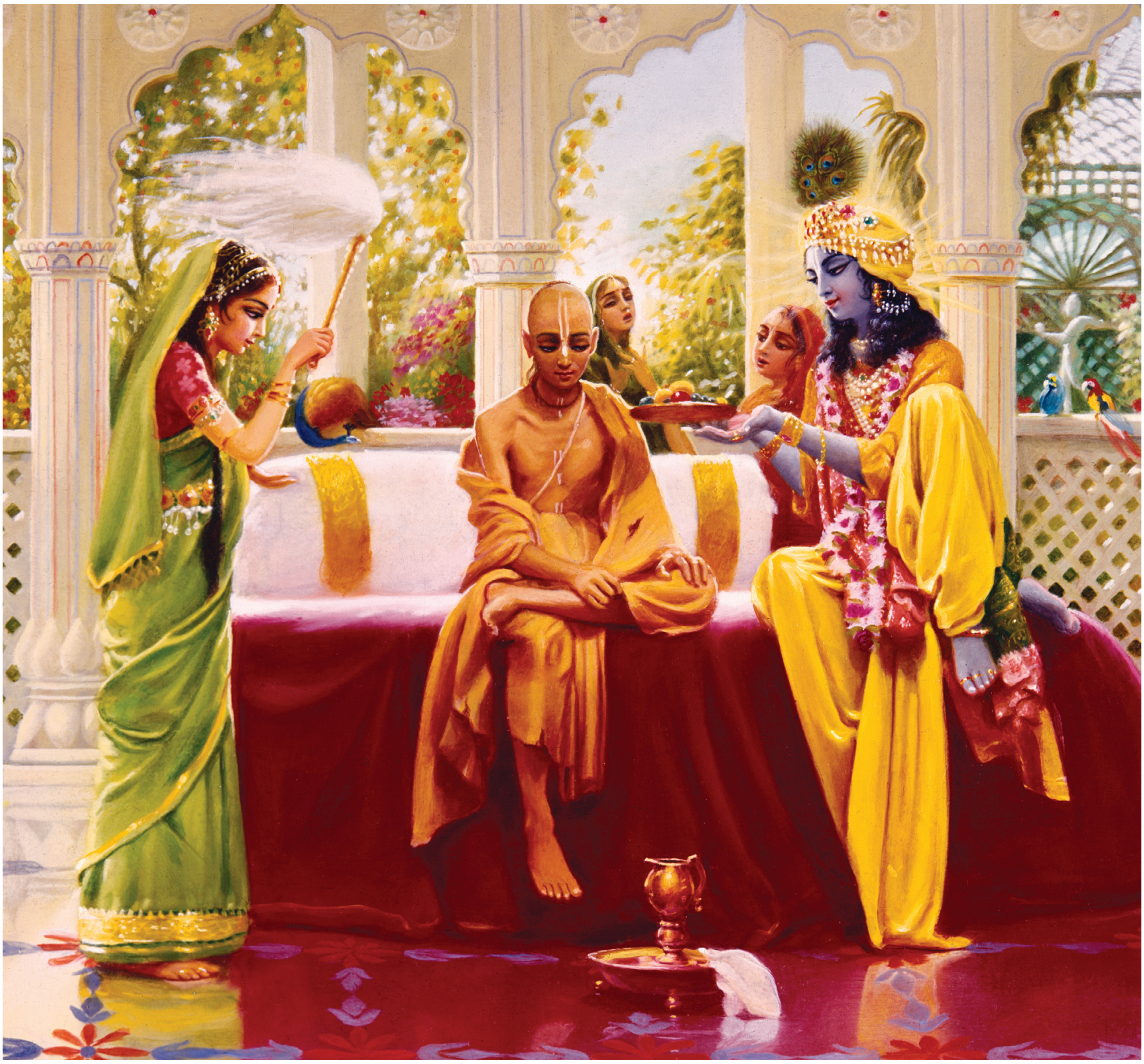
More cause for surprise is found in *Uddhava-sandeśa,* where Rūpa Gosvāmī says that Dvārakādhīśa becomes emotional by remembering His family and friends in His old cowherd village home. He misses them too much. He asks Uddhava, His cousin and closest friend, to deliver a message to them from Him. Though a king with many wives and a great kingdom to govern, to Uddhava's amazement the Lord remembers every person and detail that Uddhava will encounter when he tours the cowherd village.

Perhaps the most surprising event occurred at a great festival held at Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse, when the residents of Dvārakā met the residents of Vṛndāvana. The simple Vṛndāvana cowherds felt extremely fortunate to see Kṛṣṇa again. From within their hearts they spontaneously recalled all of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. Though unhappy seeing Him dressed as a king, they could not think of going back to Vṛndāvana without Him, so Kṛṣṇa stayed in Kurukṣetra longer than He had planned. Upon seeing the simple



Painting by Jñānāñjana Dāsa

Having tolerated the vicious criticism of Śiśupāla long enough, Kṛṣṇa beheads Him with His sudarśana *disc.*


Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

In their private royal quarters, Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī serve the humble brāhmaṇa *Sudāmā, Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee and childhood friend.*

villagers' love for Kṛṣṇa, the residents of Dvārakā felt great ecstasy. The Jagannātha Rathayātrā festival commemorates this pastime. In *Kṛṣṇa,* Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The Rathayātrā festival observed by Lord Caitanya is the emotional process of taking Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana."

The King of Kings

Kṛṣṇa is not a material person, and His actions are not the activities of this world. His unique, unrestricted pastime of rejoicing in the association of His simple cowherd family and friends is at the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Lord Caitanya teaches that above reverential worship of God is pure love in the most intimate relationships, such as friend, son, or lover. If the Lord sets aside His kingly worship in awe and reverence for the sake of Vṛndāvana's sweet, familiar, and spontaneous love, it is only another example of His transcendent love as the God who is the loyal devotee of His devotees.

Kṛṣṇa is the original supreme enjoyer. To meditate on Him as the king of kings is solid spiritual nourishment. It helps us understand the unlimited dimensions of pure power and pure love in their original spiritual forms. Dvārakādhīśa's pastimes give us transcendental insight into the love, potency, and compassion of the greatest spiritual hero and leader of all eternity. ✿

Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities in New Dwaraka, where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DELIVERANCE FROM ILLUSION

At Dakṣa’s ill-fated sacrifice, Lord Viṣṇu continues to receive prayers from the most learned and spiritually qualified living beings in the universe.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 7

विद्याधरा ऊचुः
44 त्वन्माययार्थमभिपद्य कलेवरेऽस्मिन्
कृत्वा ममाहमिति दुर्मतिरुत्पथैः स्वैः
क्षिप्तोऽप्यसद्विषयलालस आत्ममोहं
युष्मत्कथामृतनिषेवक उद्व्युदस्येत्

vidyādharā ūcuḥ
tvan-māyayārtham abhipadya kalevare ’smin
kṛtvā mamāham iti durmatir utpathaiḥ svaiḥ
kṣipto ’py asad-viṣaya-lālasa ātma-mohaṁ
yuṣmat-kathāmṛta-niṣevaka udvyudasyet

vidyādharāḥ—the Vidyādharas; *ūcuḥ*—said; *tvat-māyayā*—by Your external potency; *artham*—the human body; *abhipadya*—after obtaining; *kalevare*—in the body; *asmin*—in this; *kṛtvā*—having misidentified; *mama*—mine; *aham*—I; *iti*—thus; *durmatiḥ*—the ignorant person; *utpathaiḥ*—by wrong roads; *svaiḥ*—by one’s own belongings; *kṣiptaḥ*—distracted; *api*—even; *asat*—temporary; *viṣaya-lālasaḥ*—having his happiness in sense objects; *ātma-moham*—the illusion of the body as the self; *yuṣmat*—Your; *kathā*—topics; *amṛta*—nectar; *niṣevakaḥ*—relishing; *ut*—from a long distance; *vyudasyet*—can be delivered.

The Vidyādharas said: Dear Lord, this human form of body is meant for attaining the highest perfectional objective, but, impelled by Your external energy, the living entity misidentifies himself with his body and with the material energy, and therefore, influenced by māyā, he wants to become happy by material enjoyment. He is misled and always attracted by temporary, illusory happiness. But Your transcendental activities are so powerful that if one engages in the hearing and chanting of such topics, he can be delivered from illusion.

PURPORT: ① The human form of life is called *arthada* because the body can very nicely help the embodied soul to achieve the highest perfection. Prahlāda Mahārāja said that even though temporary, the body can give us the highest perfectional achievement. In the process of evolution from the lower to the higher grade of living, the human form of life is a great boon. But *māyā* is so strong that in spite of achieving this great boon of the human form of life, we are influenced by temporary material happiness, and we forget our goal of life. We are attracted by things which will cease to exist. The beginning of such attraction is the temporary body. ② In this horrible condition

(1) Why is human life called *arthada*, “that which gives gain”?
(2) What is the only means of liberation from the horrible condition of material life?

of life there is only one way of liberation—to engage in the activities of transcendental chanting and hearing of the holy name of the Supreme Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The words *yuṣmat-kathāmṛta-niṣevakaḥ* mean "those who relish the nectar of the topics of Your Lordship." ③ There are two narrative books which especially concern the words and activities of Kṛṣṇa. *Bhagavad-gītā* is the instruction given by Kṛṣṇa, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the book containing topics exclusively about Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. These two books are the special nectar of the words of Kṛṣṇa. For those who engage in the preaching of these two Vedic literatures it is very easy to get out of the illusory conditional life imposed upon us by *māyā.*

The illusion is that the conditioned soul does not try to understand his spiritual identity. He is more interested in his external body, which is only a flash and which will be finished as soon as the time is designated. The whole atmosphere will change when the living entity has to transmigrate from one body to another. Under the spell of *māyā,* he will again be satisfied in a different atmosphere. ④ This spell of *māyā* is called *āvaraṇātmikā śakti* because it is so strong that the living entity is satisfied in any abominable condition. Even if he is born as a worm living within the intestine or abdomen in the midst of urine and stool, still he is satisfied. This is the covering influence of *māyā.*

But the human form of life is a chance to understand, and if one misses this opportunity, he is most unfortunate. The way to get out of illusory *māyā* is to engage in the topics of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya advocated a process whereby everyone may remain in his present position without change but simply hear from the proper authoritative sources about Kṛṣṇa. ⑤ Lord Caitanya advised everyone to spread the word of Kṛṣṇa. He advised, "All of you become spiritual masters. Your duty is simply to talk to whomever you meet of Kṛṣṇa or of the instructions given by Kṛṣṇa." The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is operating for this purpose. We do not ask anyone to first change his position and then come to us. Instead, we invite everyone to come with us and simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, because we know that if one simply chants and hears the topics of Kṛṣṇa, one's life will change; he will see a new light, and his life will be successful.

(3) Which two books especially contain the nectar of the words of Kṛṣṇa?
(4) Which energy, or *śakti,* of the Lord makes the living entity satisfied in any abominable condition?
(5) Who advised everyone to become spiritual masters by teaching others about Kṛṣṇa?
(6) In what way does the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* compare the Supreme Lord to fire?

ब्राह्मणा ऊचुः
45 त्वं क्रतुस्त्वं हविस्त्वं हुताशः स्वयं
त्वं हि मन्त्रः समिद्दर्भपात्राणि च
त्वं सदस्यर्त्विजो दम्पती देवता
अग्निहोत्रं स्वधा सोम आज्यं पशुः

brāhmaṇā ūcuḥ
tvaṁ kratus tvaṁ havis tvaṁ hutāśaḥ svayaṁ
tvaṁ hi mantraḥ samid-darbha-pātrāṇi ca
tvaṁ sadasyartvijo dampatī devatā
agnihotraṁ svadhā soma ājyaṁ paśuḥ

brāhmaṇāḥ—the *brāhmaṇas; ūcuḥ*—said; *tvam*—You; *kratuḥ*—sacrifice; *tvam*—You; *haviḥ*—offering of clarified butter; *tvam*—You; *huta-āśaḥ*—fire; *svayam*—personified; *tvam*—You; *hi*—for; *mantraḥ*—the Vedic hymns; *samit-darbha-pātrāṇi*—the fuel, the *kuśa* grass, and the sacrificial pots; *ca*—and; *tvam*—You; *sadasya*—the members of the assembly; *ṛtvijaḥ*—the priests; *dampatī*—the chief person of the sacrifice and his wife; *devatā*—demigods; *agni-hotram*—the sacred fire ceremony; *svadhā*—the offering to the forefathers; *somaḥ*—the soma plant; *ājyam*—the clarified butter; *paśuḥ*—the sacrificial animal.

The brāhmaṇas said: Dear Lord, You are sacrifice personified. You are the offering of clarified butter, You are the fire, You are the chanting of Vedic hymns by which the sacrifice is conducted, You are the fuel, You are the flame, You are the kuśa grass, and You are the sacrificial pots. You are the priests who perform the yajña, You are the demigods headed by Indra, and You are the sacrificial animal. Everything that is sacrificed is You or Your energy.

PURPORT: In this statement Viṣṇu's all-pervasiveness is partially explained. ⑥ It is said in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* that as a fire situated in one place emanates its heat and illumination everywhere, so whatever we see within the material or spiritual worlds is nothing but a manifestation of different energies emanating from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *brāhmaṇas'* statement is that Lord Viṣṇu is everything—the fire, the offering, the clarified butter, the utensils, the place of sacrifice, and the *kuśa.* He is everything.

It is confirmed herein that the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* in this age is as good as all other *yajñas* in all other ages. If one performs *saṅkīrtana-yajña* by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma,

Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, there is no need to arrange elaborate paraphernalia for the prescribed sacrificial ceremonies recommended in the *Vedas.* ⑦ In the chant of the holy names, Hare and Kṛṣṇa, Hare means the energy of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is the *viṣṇu-tattva.* Combined together they are everything.

In this age, persons are harassed by the influence of Kali-yuga and cannot arrange for all the requisite paraphernalia for performing sacrifice as recommended in the *Vedas.* But if one simply chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that he is performing all kinds of *yajña* because there is nothing within our vision except Hare (the energy of Kṛṣṇa) and Kṛṣṇa. There is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His energies. Thus since everything is a manifestation of His energy, it is to be understood that everything is Kṛṣṇa. One simply has to accept everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he is a liberated person.

One should not misunderstand that because everything is Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa has no personal identity. Kṛṣṇa is so full that in spite of keeping Himself separate from everything by His energy, He is everything. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā,* Ninth Chapter. He is spread throughout the creation as everything, but still He is not everything. The philosophy recommended by Lord Caitanya is that He is simultaneously one and different.

46 त्वं पुरा गां रसाया महासूकरो
दंष्ट्रया पद्मिनीं वारणेन्द्रो यथा
स्तूयमानो नदल्लीलया योगिभि-
र्व्युज्जहर्थ त्रयीगात्र यज्ञक्रतुः

tvaṁ purā gāṁ rasāyā mahā-sūkaro
daṁṣṭrayā padminīṁ vāraṇendro yathā
stūyamāno nadal līlayā yogibhir
vyujjahartha trayī-gātra yajña-kratuḥ

tvam—You; *purā*—in the past; *gām*—the earth; *rasāyāḥ*—from within the water; *mahā-sūkaraḥ*—the great boar incarnation; *daṁṣṭrayā*—with Your tusk; *padminīm*—a lotus; *vāraṇa-indraḥ*—an elephant; *yathā*—as; *stūyamānaḥ*—being offered prayers; *nadan*—vibrating; *līlayā*—very easily; *yogibhiḥ*—by great sages like Sanaka, etc.; *vyujjahartha*—picked up; *trayī-gātra*—O personified Vedic knowledge; *yajña-kratuḥ*—having the form of sacrifice.

Dear Lord, O personified Vedic knowledge, in the past millennium, long, long ago, when You appeared as the great boar incarnation, You picked up the world from the water, as an elephant picks up a lotus flower from a lake. When You vibrated transcendental sound in that gigantic form of a boar, the sound was accepted as a sacrificial hymn, and great sages like Sanaka meditated upon it and offered prayers for Your glorification.

PURPORT: ⑧ A significant word used in this verse is *trayī-gātra,* which means that the transcendental form of the Lord is the *Vedas.* Anyone who engages in the worship of the Deity, or the form of the Lord in the temple, is understood to be studying all the *Vedas* twenty-four hours a day. Simply by decorating the Deities of the Lord, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in the temple, one very minutely studies the injunctions of the *Vedas.* Even a neophyte devotee who simply engages in the worship of the Deity is understood to be in direct touch with the purport of Vedic knowledge. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15), *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ:* the purport of the *Vedas* is to understand Him, Kṛṣṇa. One who worships and serves Kṛṣṇa directly has understood the truths of the *Vedas.*

47 स प्रसीद त्वमस्माकमाकाङ्क्षतां
दर्शनं ते परिभ्रष्टसत्कर्मणाम्
कीर्त्यमाने नृभिर्नाम्नि यज्ञेश ते
यज्ञविघ्नाः क्षयं यान्ति तस्मै नमः

sa prasīda tvam asmākam ākāṅkṣatāṁ
darśanaṁ te paribhraṣṭa-sat-karmaṇām
kīrtyamāne nṛbhir nāmni yajñeśa te
yajña-vighnāḥ kṣayaṁ yānti tasmai namaḥ

saḥ—that same person; *prasīda*—be pleased; *tvam* You; *asmākam*—upon us; *ākāṅkṣatām*—awaiting; *darśanam*—audience; *te*—Your; *paribhraṣṭa*—fallen down; *sat-karmaṇām*—of whom the performance of sacrifice; *kīrtyamāne*—being chanted; *nṛbhiḥ*—by persons; *nāmni*—Your holy name; *yajña-īśa*—O Lord of sacrifice; *te*—Your; *yajña-vighnāḥ*—obstacles; *kṣayam*—destruction; *yānti*—attain; *tasmai*—unto You; *namaḥ*—respectful obeisances.

Dear Lord, we were awaiting Your audience because we have been unable to perform the yajñas according to the Vedic rituals. We pray unto You, therefore, to be pleased with us. Simply by chanting Your holy name, one can surpass all obstacles. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You in Your presence.

PURPORT: The *brāhmaṇa* priests were very hopeful that their sacrifice would be carried out without obstacles now that Lord Viṣṇu was present. It is significant in this verse that the *brāhmaṇas* say, "Simply by chanting Your holy

(7) How is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* an expression of everything?
(8) Why is one who worships the form of the Lord in the temple understood to be studying all the *Vedas*?

name we can surpass the obstacles, but now You are personally present." The performance of *yajña* by Dakṣa was obstructed by the disciples and followers of Lord Śiva. ⑨ The *brāhmaṇas* indirectly criticized the followers of Lord Śiva, but because the *brāhmaṇas* were always protected by Lord Viṣṇu, Śiva's followers could not do any harm to their prosecution of the sacrificial process.

There is a saying that when Kṛṣṇa protects someone, no one can do him harm, and when Kṛṣṇa wants to kill someone, no one can protect him. The vivid example was Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa was a great devotee of Lord Śiva, but when Lord Rāmacandra wanted to kill him, Lord Śiva could not protect him. If some demigod, even Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā, wants to do harm to a devotee, Kṛṣṇa protects the devotee. But when Kṛṣṇa wants to kill someone, such as Rāvaṇa or Hiraṇyakaśipu, no demigod can protect him.

मैत्रेय उवाच
48 इति दक्षः कविर्यज्ञं भद्र रुद्राभिमर्शितम्
कीर्त्यमाने हृषीकेशे सन्निन्ये यज्ञभावने

maitreya uvāca
iti dakṣaḥ kavir yajñaṁ
bhadra rudrābhimarśitam
kīrtyamāne hṛṣīkeśe
sanninye yajña-bhāvane

maitreyaḥ—Maitreya; *uvāca*—said; *iti*—thus; *dakṣaḥ*—Dakṣa; *kaviḥ*—being purified in consciousness; *yajñam*—the sacrifice; *bhadra*—O Vidura; *rudra-abhimarśitam*—devastated by Vīrabhadra; *kīrtya-māne*—being glorified; *hṛṣīkeśe*—Hṛṣīkeśa (Lord Viṣṇu); *sanninye*—arranged for restarting; *yajña-bhāvane*—the protector of sacrifice.

Śrī Maitreya said: After Lord Viṣṇu was glorified by all present, Dakṣa, his consciousness purified, arranged to begin again the yajña which had been devastated by the followers of Lord Śiva.

49 भगवान् स्वेन भागेन सर्वात्मा सर्वभागभुक्
दक्षं बभाष आभाष्य प्रीयमाण इवानघ

bhagavān svena bhāgena
sarvātmā sarva-bhāga-bhuk
dakṣaṁ babhāṣa ābhāṣya
prīyamāṇa ivānagha

bhagavān—Lord Viṣṇu; *svena*—with His own; *bhāgena*—with the share; *sarva-ātmā*—the Supersoul of all living entities; *sarva-bhāga-bhuk*—the enjoyer of the results of all sacrifices; *dakṣam*—Dakṣa; *babhāṣe*—said; *ābhāṣya*—addressing; *prīyamāṇaḥ*—being satisfied; *iva*—as; *anagha*—O sinless Vidura.

Maitreya continued: My dear sinless Vidura, Lord Viṣṇu is actually the enjoyer of the results of all sacrifices. Yet because of His being the Supersoul of all living entities, He was satisfied simply with His share of the sacrificial offerings. He therefore addressed Dakṣa in a pleasing attitude.

PURPORT: In *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29) it is said, *bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām:* Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme enjoyer of all the results of sacrifices, austerities, and penances; in whatever one may engage, the ultimate goal is Viṣṇu. If a person does not know that, he is misled. ⑩ As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu has nothing to demand from anyone. He is self-satisfied, self-sufficient, but He accepts the offerings of *yajña* because of His friendly attitude toward all living entities. When His share of the sacrificial results was offered to Him, He appeared very pleased.

It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26), *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati:* if any devotee offers Him even a small leaf, or a flower, or water, if it is offered with love and affection, the Lord accepts it and is pleased. Although He is self-sufficient and does not need anything from anyone, He accepts such offerings because, as Supersoul, He has such a friendly attitude toward all living entities.

Another point here is that He does not encroach upon another's share. In the *yajña* there is a share for the demigods, Lord Śiva, and Lord Brahmā, and a share for Lord Viṣṇu. He is satisfied with His own share and does not encroach upon others'. Indirectly, He indicated that He was not satisfied with Dakṣa's trying to deny Lord Śiva his share.

Maitreya addressed Vidura as sinless because Vidura was a pure Vaiṣṇava and never committed any offense to any demigod. Although Vaiṣṇavas accept Lord Viṣṇu as the Supreme, they are not prone to offend demigods. They give the demigods proper respect. Vaiṣṇavas accept Lord Śiva as the best Vaiṣṇava. For a Vaiṣṇava there is no possibility of offending any demigods, and the demigods are also pleased with the Vaiṣṇava because they are faultless devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

(9) Why were the followers of Lord Śiva unable to harm the *brāhmaṇas'* prosecution of the sacrifice?
(10) Why does the Supreme Personality of Godhead accept the offerings of *yajña* even though He is self-satisfied?

The Right Prayer For Failing Schools

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a divinity student took place in Los Angeles, in January 1974.

Student: Many people are frightened about the way the schools are falling apart—students not even learning how to read and write, many turning to drugs and robbing and raping their teachers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. What is the value of this kind of schooling?

Student: Not an awful lot.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is all cheating. You have left God out. That is the height of cheating. So naturally the rest of your so-called schooling must also be cheating. Suppose you are doing a mathematical calculation and you start by figuring, "2 + 2 = 3." After that you may use the most sophisticated techniques and formulas, but your whole calculation will be wrong.

Student: Now things have gotten to the point that we can't even have prayer in the public schools. We used to have a prayer at the beginning of each school day. But then one atheist lady (and no doubt other people behind the scenes) pushed and pushed until the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. Now prayer in the schools is banned.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But even if prayer were allowed, that would not help. Prayer is still going on in the churches, and what is the benefit? People are losing interest, because it has all become simply a ritualistic show—"Churchianity." The thing is, you have to become educated in the science of God. You must have direct, scientific experience of God. People aren't

HARE KṚṢṆA
HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA
HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA
HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA
HARE HARE

PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)

interested in dry words. They have become scientific-minded; they want results.

Student: Well, most people still have a sentimental attachment to God, so most likely they would like to see at least a semblance of prayer in the schools.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Do something practical! “Prayer” means chanting the holy name of the Lord. If you don’t know the holy name of the Lord, we are giving it. You’ll have no expenditure, and no loss. So why don’t you try this? Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. And if you actually chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will get scientific, realized knowledge of God—direct, personal experience of God. Then everything beneficial will follow for society.

Student: Yes. But, you see, right now you can’t chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in the schools. That law is still there on the books. You can’t chant until somebody changes the law.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So my disciples can do that.

Student: They should try to fight the law?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Just recently I heard that the senators and congressmen have set aside one special day each year for public prayer. Just one day—but they still want prayer. So if they actually want prayer, why are they prohibiting it all the rest of the year? Just see the contradiction! They have banned prayer because of their inexperience. And now they are experiencing, “This does not help us.” Otherwise, what is the use of introducing prayer again? They have experienced that without prayer things have failed. That is a fact.

Student: You were saying earlier that fifty to sixty percent of the senators and congressmen are lawyers . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, and nowadays “lawyer” means cheater. One who can tactfully break the law—he is a good lawyer. They will find some flaw in the letter of the law so that they can avoid the spirit of the law.

Student: Actually, to ban prayer in the schools they had to avoid the whole point of the First Amendment—that “Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion.” They said a prayer might trample an atheist’s right not to pray.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So now the children cannot have a prayer in their schools. These government men are mostly lawyers, cheaters. People have become cheaters, and that is why they elect such cheaters as their representatives. You Americans can make all the propaganda you want, but you will not be happy without offering prayer to God.

Student: That’s right.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But be scientific. To begin with, follow God’s laws and lead a pure life: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling. If you reinstate prayer in the schools, that is not bad; but unless you first become pure, your prayer will have no practical effect. You yourselves must be free from all these impure activities. Then from among yourselves you can elect a good leader. If you really want a good leader, then you yourselves must become good. And you can become good by offering prayer to God.

Student: Forgive me, but this sounds like we’re getting into some sort of vicious circle. A moment ago you said we have to become pure or good first or our prayer will have no effect. So now how can you say we can become good by offering prayer?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not just any kind of prayer. “Prayer” means that you chant the name of God. If you simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will be in touch with God—the all-good. And then naturally you will become good. Why don’t you try it?

Student: We have little more to lose.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will be the gainer. Just chant and see the result.

Calendar

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.krishna.com/calendar.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 29–September 26)

SEPTEMBER

4—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

5—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

7—Annadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

16—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

20—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

23—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

24—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

25—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa,* the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

Month of Padmanābha

(September 27–October 26)

OCTOBER

3—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States.

6—Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

21—Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

22—Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

26—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śāradīyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya. Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *ūrad dāl*).

Month of Dāmodara

(October 27–November 24)

30—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

NOVEMBER

2—Appearance of Radha Kunda.

5—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

9—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

11—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

14—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

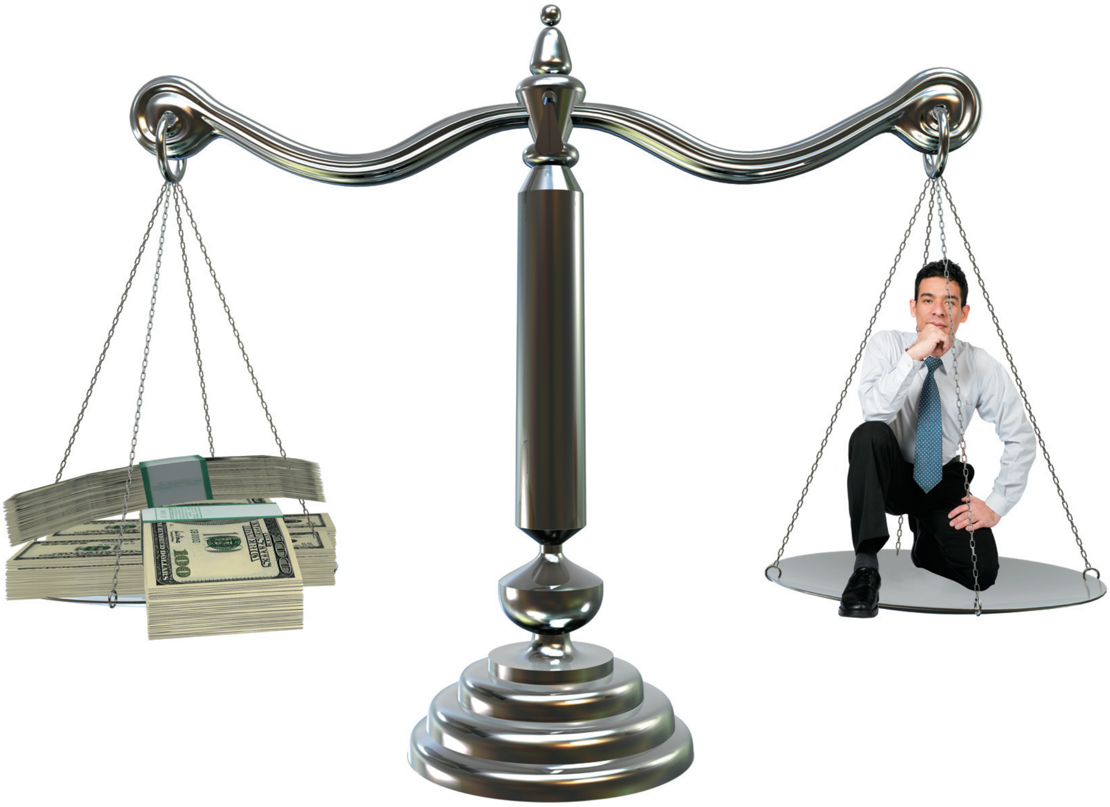
Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

Photographer: Susan Quinland-Stringer / Agency: Dreamstime.com

What Is Life Worth?

by Kṛṣṇa Dharma Dāsa

FEW THINGS FIRE the public imagination more than the disappearance of a child. When little Madeleine McCann vanished from her Portuguese holiday home recently it was headline news for weeks. Pictures of her pretty face, along with others of her poor distraught parents, were seen across the world. A campaign fund to find her quickly rose into the millions, and police forces everywhere were alerted to join in the search.



© Photographers: Eraxion (scale); Andres Rodriguez (man) | Agency: Dreamstime.com. Montage: Yamarāja Dāsa

It's a heartbreaking story, and we can only pray that it has a happy ending, but it made me think about the value of life. To find just one person no expense is spared. The same applies when it comes to saving lives. Surgeons, nurses, doctors, hospitals, and expensive equipment will all be brought to bear to save someone threatened by a critical illness. If a man is stranded in the wilderness, we will bring helicopters, airplanes, and whatever it takes to get him out. Life is important. It must be preserved at any cost.

This is especially true when it comes to our own lives. We will do anything to save our own skins, spending our entire life savings if necessary to get medical treatment. We will not go gentle into that good night, as Dylan Thomas put it, neither ourselves nor anyone else if we can help it. We want to fend off the Grim Reaper as long as we can.

That's obvious, one might say. But as the contradictions in modern ethics reveal, it is remarkably difficult to construct a consistent moral framework that supports our high regard for life's value. For example, it might be argued that life should be preserved so we can carry on enjoying. In which case what is really being said is that the truly valuable thing is the ability to enjoy. But our society slaughters animals without compunction. They too enjoy as we do. They also value their lives and do not want to die. So if this is our argument, we should at once stop killing them for our enjoyment.

If we counter by saying human life has more value because of our higher intelligence—our art, science, philosophy, and so on—then is it acceptable to kill less intelligent humans? Of course not. No matter how mentally or physically challenged someone may be, they are still considered equally deserving of life.

What exactly is it that we are struggling to safeguard anyway? Life is precious, but what is that life? If we start by qualifying the preciousness as pertaining only to humans, then is it the human body we value? If so, why do we discard dead bodies—bury or burn them? Plainly a dead body has little intrinsic value, so what does? When a person dies, what has gone missing from the body—that most precious thing that made us employ the best of our technology and skills to protect it?

Such an important question, which underpins our greatest endeavors, but are we even trying to find the answer? Are our schools and colleges tackling it? Education aims at improving our bodily and mental situation, but what about the principle of life itself, upon which everything else depends? Śrīla Prabhupāda would often challenge us that we have no educational departments dedicated to discovering the "difference between a live and a dead body."

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, human life is also considered most valuable, but there are good reasons. All life is seen as a part of God, dear to Him, and in that sense all equally valuable. We cannot whimsically kill any living creature. "Thou shalt not kill." But human life is considered especially valuable as it affords us the chance to make spiritual enquiry, to find the answer to the question "What is life worth?" This is seen as the very purpose of life. Who am I? Why am I here? Where will I go when I die? Can I influence that destination so it is somewhere desirable? Vedic wisdom exhorts us to focus on these all-important questions and not just let our life slip by in ignorance, with little more than hope that we will end up in some pleasant place.

And the Vedic literature gives the answers. We are eternal souls, different from the bodies we inhabit, meant to enjoy unending happiness in the Lord's association.

I saw a film about a man who suddenly woke up in a strange place with amnesia. He had forgotten who he was, and he had no idea how he had gotten there. The whole film was about his great efforts to discover his identity and what had happened, which of course is what anybody would have done in his situation. But this really is our position, and the value of human life is that we can discover the truth. Let's not waste that opportunity.

Kṛṣṇa Dharma Dāsa lives in Manchester, England. He has written retellings of the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, *and* Pañca Tantra.

Soulful Science

by Satyarāja Dāsa

"SCIENCE AND THE SOUL," a recent *U.S. News and World Report* cover story, caught my eye. It documents a new trend in which a contingent of modern scientists is reconsidering longstanding assumptions about the mind, consciousness, and, yes, even the soul.

"There is something troubling, if not downright offensive," writes author Jay Tolson, "about the effort to reduce human consciousness to the operations of a 3-pound chunk of wrinkled brain tissue."

His point is clear: There's more to human existence than the world we see around us. And an increasing number of scientists of various disciplines are now agreeing with him.

"Not only has advanced neuroscientific research revealed an obdurate mystery at the core of consciousness," he muses, "but theoretical advances in the natural and physical sciences have greatly complicated the effort to reduce all human phenomena—the mind notably included—to the effects of material causes."

This is a far cry from the claims of scientists like Francis Crick, among others, who slightly more than a decade ago wrote in his acclaimed book, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*, "The Astonishing Hypothesis is that 'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."

Crick really believes that hypothesis.

Scientists have traditionally held one of two positions on the soul. The first argues that souls clearly exist but science can't prove or disprove this fact, because the soul is spiritual and science uses tools made of matter. According to the other well-worn perspective, souls do not exist and it would be a waste of time for science to try to prove that they do.

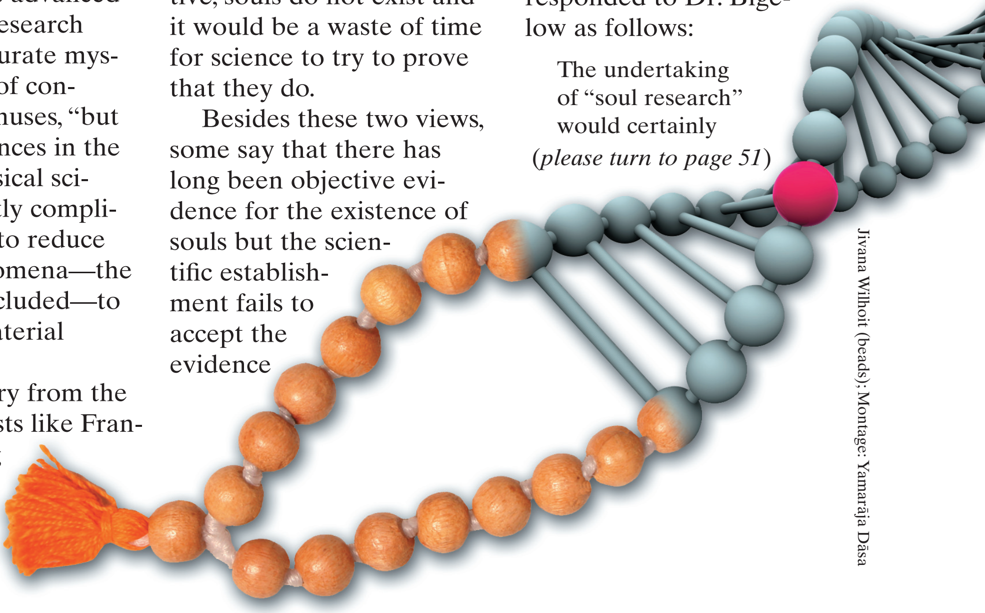
Besides these two views, some say that there has long been objective evidence for the existence of souls but the scientific establishment fails to accept the evidence because it contradicts conventional materialistic thinking. It is also true that some scientists would like to believe in the existence of the soul, but they fear being rejected by their more closed-minded coworkers.

Could science ever really determine whether or not the soul exists? It's unlikely. Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda believed that making the attempt is a step in the right direction.

As early as the mid-70s, the Montreal *Gazette* ran an article by world-famous cardiologist Wilfred G. Bigelow, urging systematic research to determine what the soul is and where it comes from. Śrīla Prabhupāda responded to Dr. Bigelow as follows:

> The undertaking of "soul research" would certainly

(*please turn to page 51*)



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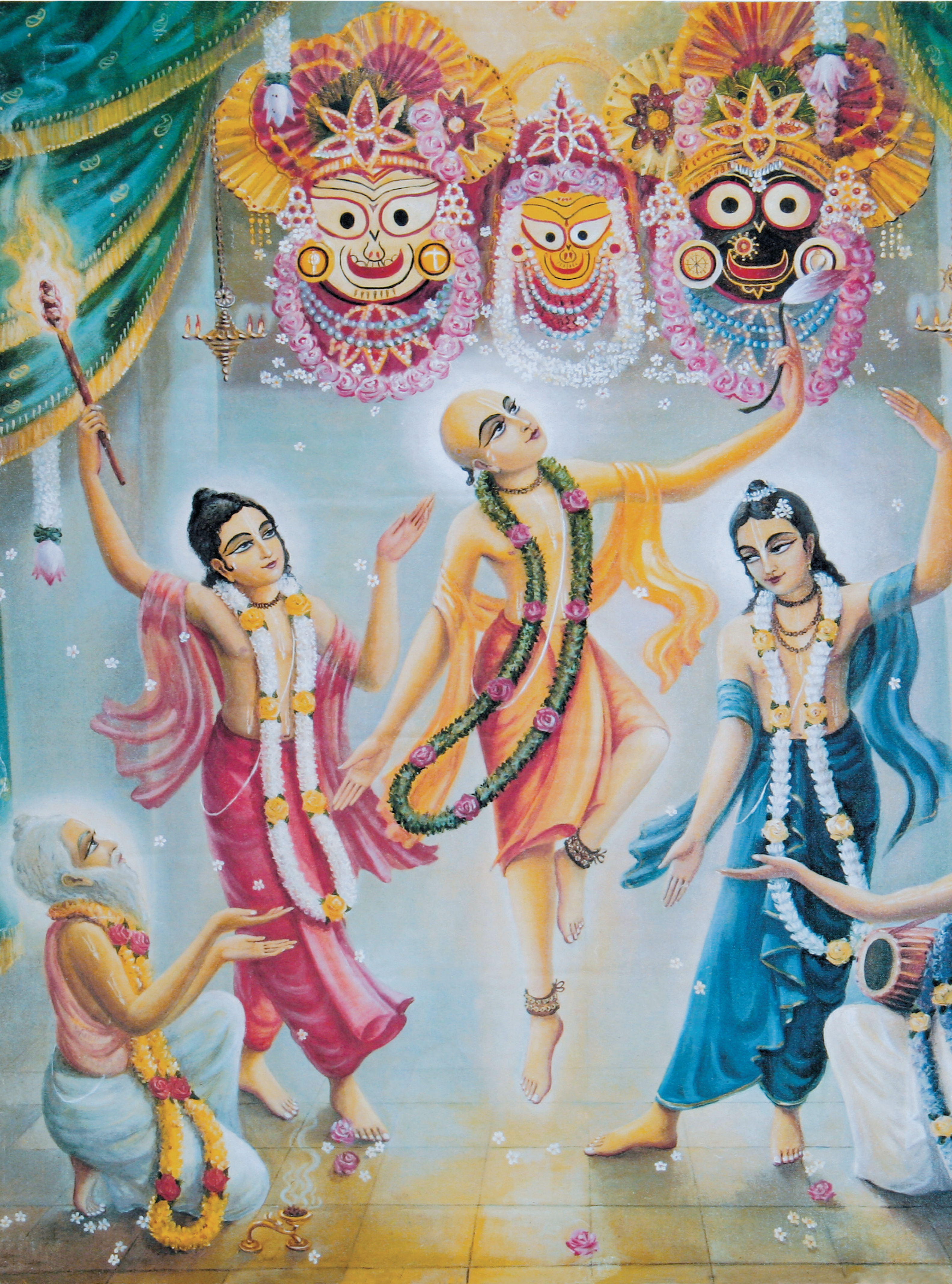
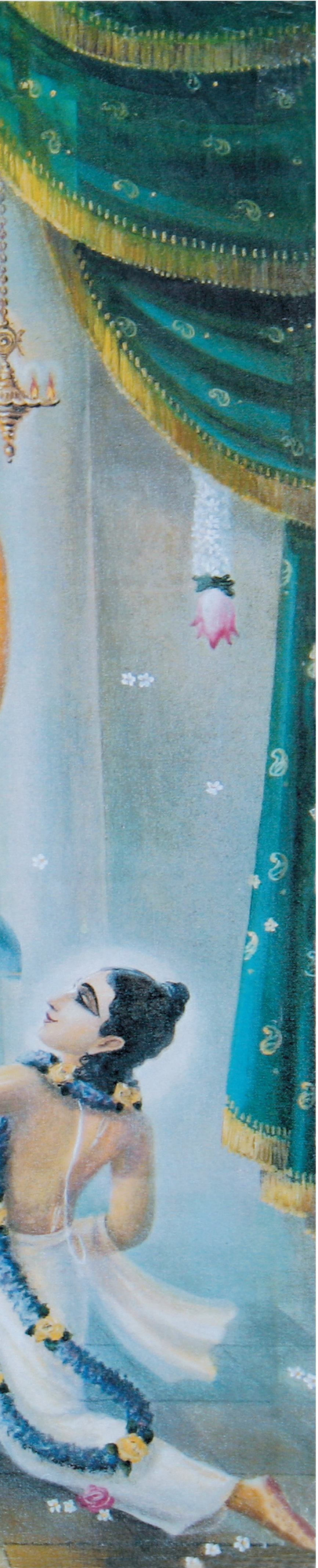
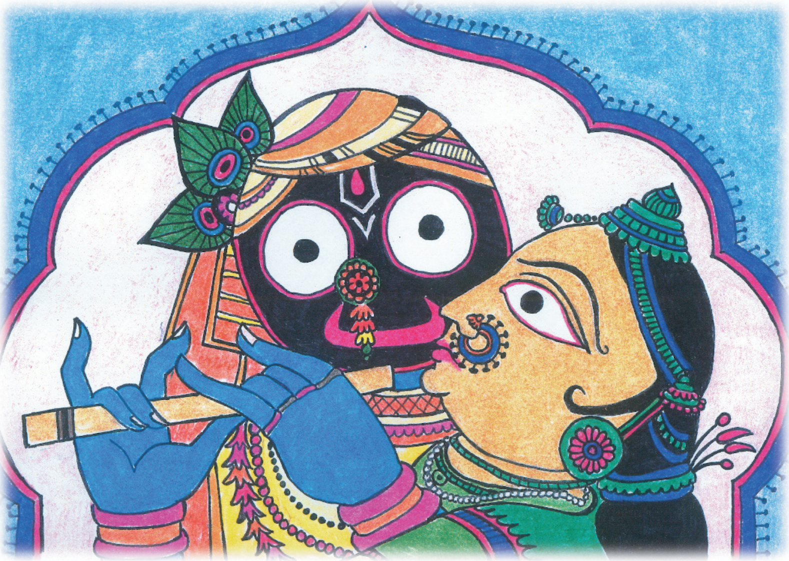
Jivana Wilhoit (beads); Montage: Yamarāja Dāsa







Why Kṛṣṇa Appears As JAGANNĀTHA

In a unique form, Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshiped in a famous temple in Puri, India, and at Rathayātrās (chariot festivals) there and around the world.

by Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa

I WAS BORN in a conservative Orissan Vaiṣṇava family in Puri, on the east coast of India. The Supreme Lord Jagannātha and His devotees were at the center of my life. As a child, I played with dolls of Jagannātha, Baladeva (Balarāma), and Subhadrā, the deities in the famous Puri temple. I still remember how my mother gave me enormous plates of Jagannātha *prasādam* and told me to always remember the Lord. I saw how the simple and devoted Orissan people—even doctors, engineers, and scientists—never neglect to honor Lord Jagannātha. I watched how the king of Puri becomes a humble servant and sweeps the street before Jagannātha's cart during the yearly Rathayātrā, or festival of the chariots.

Lord Jagannātha may look peculiar and strange to the Western world, but He is the life and soul of the Orissans. Even though I attended the Rathayātrā festival for many years in my youth, it was not until I met the devotees of ISKCON that my devotion for Jagannātha deepened. Now Jagannātha is worshiped in many ISKCON temples around the world, and I have grown to see Him as the most merciful and charming person who excuses His

Left: The Pañca-tattva—Lord Caitanya and His four main associates—dance before Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. Above, in a typical Orissan painting, Lord Kṛṣṇa, with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, is depicted as Jagannātha.

Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā (left) worshiped at the home of Yadunandana Devī Dāsī in Alachua, Florida. Right, while taking the audience of Lord Jagannātha in the Puri temple, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sees Him as Kṛṣṇa in His original form.

devotees' offenses and attracts them further along the path of devotional service.

Jagannātha means "Lord of the universe." Many Vedic books mention that Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa. Baladeva is His brother, and Subhadrā is His sister.

Although Kṛṣṇa is absolute and transcendental to material nature, to accept the loving service of His devotees He appears before us as the deity in the temple, in the form of stone, metal, wood, or paint. Jagannātha is a wooden form of Kṛṣṇa.

Because Jagannātha does not look like Kṛṣṇa, people may wonder how He can be Kṛṣṇa. Scriptures tell the story behind Jagannātha's peculiar form.

Jagannātha's Transcendental Advent

The *Skanda Purāṇa* relates King Indradyumna's quest to find a deity form of Kṛṣṇa after dreaming of a beautiful blue deity named Nīla Mādhava. The name describes the sapphire color of the deity: *Nīla* means blue, and Mādhava is one of Kṛṣṇa's names. King Indradyumna sent messengers in all directions to find Nīla Mādhava, and a *brāhmaṇa* named Vidyāpati returned successful. He discovered that Viśvāvasu,

Other Evidence That Jagannātha Is Kṛṣṇa

EVEN IN INDIA, where Lord Jagannātha has been worshiped for centuries, there is sometimes confusion over His identity. Here is more evidence that He is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta-govinda* identifies Kṛṣṇa as Jagannātha with the refrain *jaya jagadīśa hare* in the *daśāvatara* portion of the poem (describing ten principal incarnations). Jagannātha and Kṛṣṇa are identified as the source of all incarnations, the *avatārī.* This poem is sung daily to Jagannātha in His temple in Puri.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* glorifies Jagannātha as the support of the universe, reflecting Kṛṣṇa's statement in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.7): "Everything rests upon Me, as pearls strung on a thread."

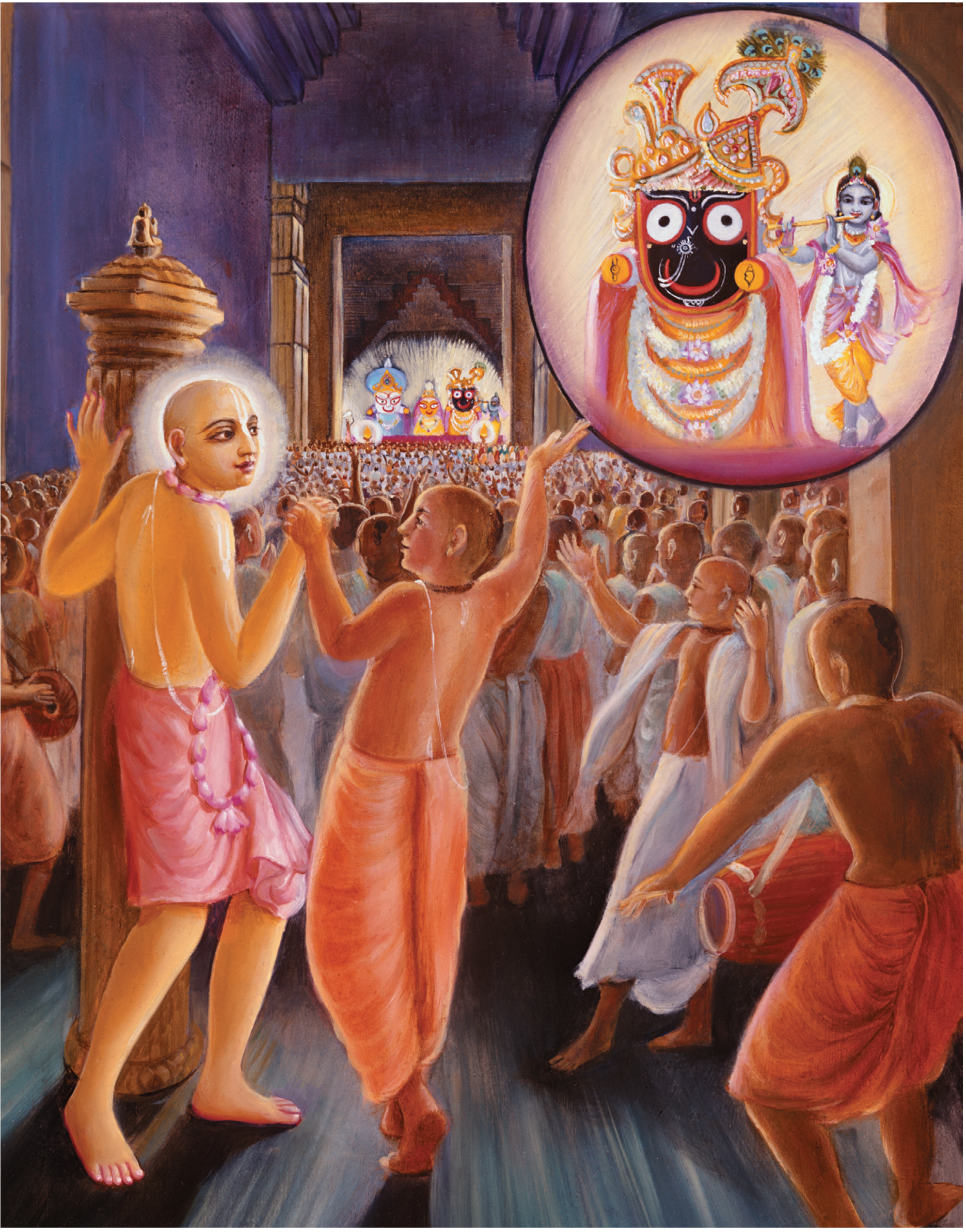
The *Nīlādrimahodaya* (IV), which builds upon the earlier *Skanda Purāṇa,* directly refers to Jagannātha as Kṛṣṇa and describes His color and form as identical to Kṛṣṇa's: "The color of the body of Śrī Jagannātha was cloud blue, and He was on a lotus seat." Although the deity looks different, the description of His complexion implies that Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa. The poem also uses Kṛṣṇa's names Gopījanavallabha, Acyuta, Nārāyaṇa, and Kṛpāsindhu to refer to Jagannātha.

In the *Padma Purāṇa,* Jagannātha is called Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person), as well as Kṛṣṇa and other names of Kṛṣṇa: Mādhava, Hari, Madhusūdana, Murāri, Nārāyaṇa, and Kamala-pati (husband of the goddess of fortune). He is described as the protector of religion and as Paramātmā, the Supersoul in the heart of every living entity.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciple Vāsudeva Ghoṣa has sung, *je kṛṣṇa, se gaura, se jagannātha*: there is no difference between Gaura (Caitanya Mahāprabhu), Kṛṣṇa, and Jagannātha.

A Bengali prayer to Jagannātha states, *jaya jaya jagannātha megha-śyāma-varṇa / gopī-jana-vallabha mādhava-abhinna:* "All glories to Lord Jagannātha, whose complexion is that of a dark rain cloud and who is Gopījanavallabha, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself." Hinting at the internal meaning of His form, the prayer also mentions that Jagannātha is *vipralambha-bhāva*, absorbed in His own ecstasy.

Painting by Jāhnavā Devī Dāsī



a pig farmer (*sāvara*) in a remote tribal village, was secretly worshiping Nīla Mādhava. When Vidyāpati later returned to that place with Indradyumna, however, Nīla Mādhava was gone. King Indradyumna surrounded the village with his soldiers and arrested Viśvāvasu.

Then a voice from the sky proclaimed, "Release the *sāvara* and build a big temple for Me on top of Nīla Hill. There you will see Me, not as Nīla Mādhava, but in a form made of neem wood."

Nīla Mādhava promised to appear as wood (*dāru*), and thus He is called *dāru-brahma* ("wood-spirit"). Indradyumna waited by the ocean, where the Lord arrived as a giant log floating toward the beach.

Disguised an old man, Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods, arrived to carve the deities under the condition that he would remain undisturbed for twenty-one days. King Indradyumna consented, and the artist worked behind locked doors. Before the time period was up, however, the noise stopped, and King Indradyumna's intense curiosity prompted him to open the doors. Viśvakarmā had disappeared. In the room, the three deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā looked as if unfinished—without hands or feet—and Indradyumna became greatly perturbed, thinking he had offended the Lord.

That night, Jagannātha spoke to the king in a dream and reassured him, explaining that He was revealing Himself in that form out of His own inconceivable desire, to show the world that He can accept offerings without hands, and move around without feet.

Lord Jagannātha told the king, "Know for sure that My hands and feet are the ornament of all ornaments, but for your satisfaction, you may give Me gold and silver hands and feet from time to time."

Devotees now worship the same "unfinished" forms of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā in Puri and in temples around the world. These forms are part of their eternal pastimes.

Transformed By Rohiṇī's Talks

The *Utkala-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* gives another account related to Kṛṣṇa's appearance as Jagannātha. (Utkala is the traditional name for Orissa.) Once, during a solar eclipse, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Subhadrā, and other residents of Dwaraka went to bathe in a holy pond at Kurukshetra. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa would be there, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's parents Nanda and Yaśodā, and other residents of Vṛndāvana, who were burning in the fire of separation from the Lord, went to meet Him. Inside one of the many tents the pilgrims had set up at Kurukshetra, Rohiṇī, Lord Balarāma's mother, narrated Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes to the queens of Dwaraka and others.

The residents of Dwaraka are said to be in the mood of opulence (*aiśvarya*), and they worship Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. But the residents of Vṛndāvana are in the mood of sweetness (*mādhurya*), and they have a confidential relationship with Kṛṣṇa that surpasses awe and reverence because it is based on friendship and love. Rohiṇī's narration was thus extremely confidential, so she posted Subhadrā at the door to prevent anyone from entering.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to the door and stood on either side of Subhadrā. While listening to Rohiṇī's narration of Kṛṣṇa's

The Jagannātha chariot festival (Rathayātrā) in Puri (right) has taken place annually for thousands of years. Opposite page: Thousands of devotees of Lord Jagannātha attend this summer's New York City Rathayātrā, which travels down Fifth Avenue from Central Park to Washington Square Park.

Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa

intimate Vṛndāvana pastimes, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma became ecstatic, and Their internal feelings were exhibited externally. Their eyes became dilated, Their heads compressed into Their bodies, and Their limbs retracted. Seeing these transformations in Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Subhadrā also became ecstatic and assumed a similar form. Thus, by hearing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, with Subhadrā in between, displayed their ecstatic forms of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā.

The Lord's Highest Ecstasy

According to the *Skanda Purāṇa,* the Jyeṣṭha-pūrṇimā, the full-moon day of the month of May-June, is the birthday of Jagannātha. Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa's birthday is Janmāṣṭamī, in the month of Bhādra (August-September). This apparent contradiction is resolved if we understand that the Jyeṣṭha-pūrṇimā is the time when Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of Jagannātha with big, dilated eyes and shrunken limbs. This is known as *mahābhāva-prakāśa*, the ecstatic form of Kṛṣṇa. *Mahābhāva* means "the highest ecstasy," and *prakāśa* means "manifestation," so Jagannātha is literally the ecstatic form of Kṛṣṇa.

The poem *Mahābhāva Prakāśa* by the Oriyan poet Kanai Khuntia describes the confidential meaning behind the form of Jagannātha: He is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's pangs of separation from the residents of Vṛndāvana, particularly Rādhā and the *gopīs.* Scriptures explain that intense feelings of spiritual ecstasy, especially in this mood of separation from a loved one, produce transformations in the body. Since Kṛṣṇa is not different from His body, His internal feeling showed externally, and He assumed the form of Jagannātha.

The ecstasy of *mahābhāva* is compared to an ocean. In the pastime with King Indradyumna, a giant log floated on the ocean. Similarly, the forms of Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā float on the ocean of *mahābhāva.*

When the sage Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa transformed as Jagannātha, he prayed to the Lord to appear like this again. Although the Lord is not obliged to anyone, He reciprocates with His devotees to fulfill their desires. In *Garga Saṁhitā* Kṛṣṇa states (1.27.4): "I am full—all the epics in one. Yet I surrender to the wish of My devotee and come in whatever form he wants." Thus, just as Kṛṣṇa appeared as Nīla Mādhava to satisfy Viśvāvasu, He appeared in the deity form as Jagannātha and resides in Jagannatha Puri to satisfy the desire of Nārada Muni.

This special form of Kṛṣṇa is also known as Patita Pāvana, the savior of the fallen, and anyone who takes His audience with proper consciousness is awarded spiritual liberation.

Jagannātha as Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana

Although Jagannātha is often identified with Kṛṣṇa of Dwaraka, in the mood of opulence, His actual but confidential identity is as Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana, the lover of Rādhārāṇī. The *Jagannātha Caritāmṛtam* says, "Rādhā stays in the heart of Jagannātha, and so does Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

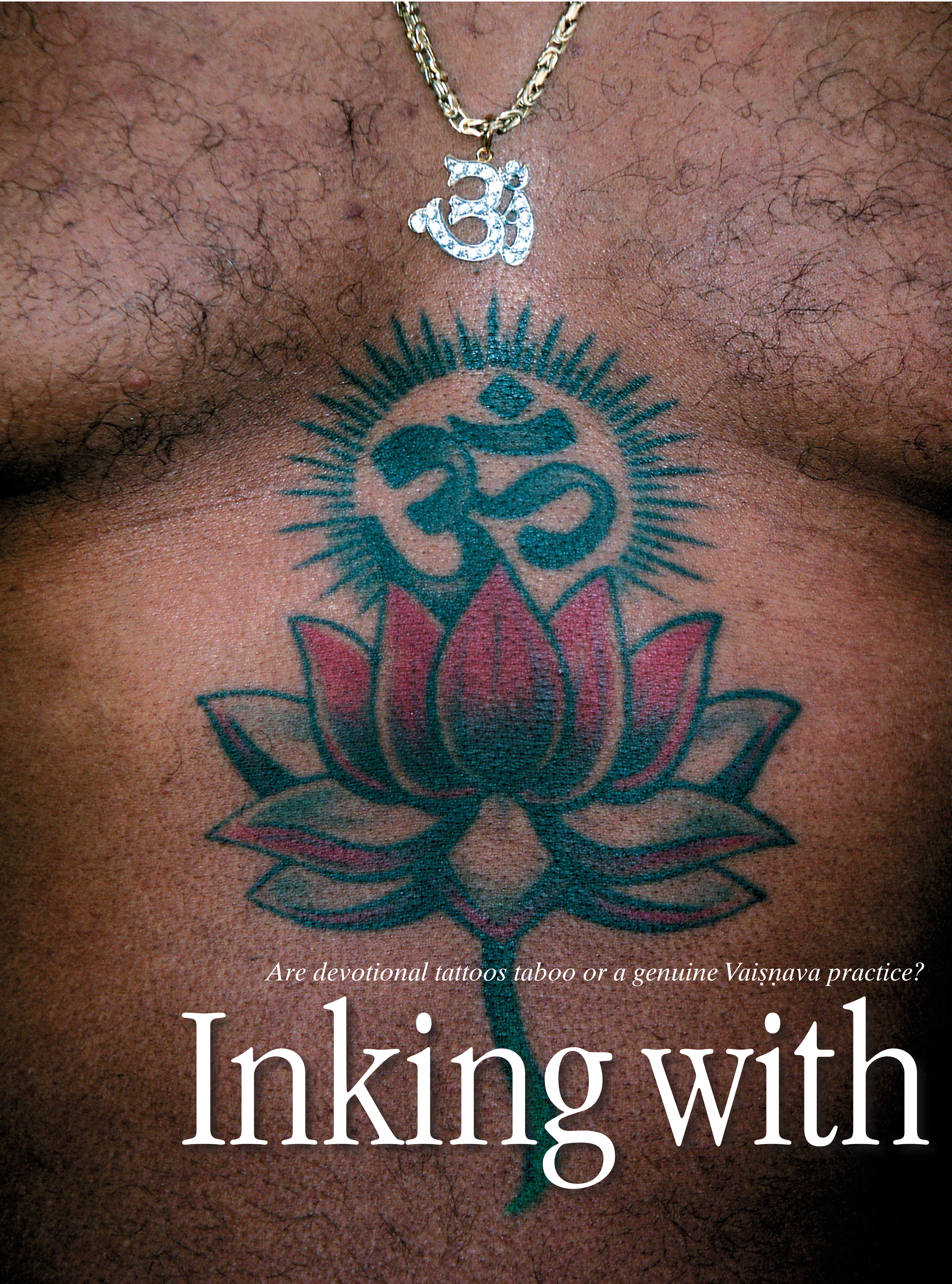
Kṛṣṇa is known by His relationships, especially with the residents of Vṛndāvana, and devotees sometimes refer to Jagannātha in this way. Jagannātha is considered the consort of Rādhārāṇī, who associates with Kṛṣṇa only in His mood of Vṛndāvana. The ecstasy that resulted from Kṛṣṇa's love for Rādhārāṇī caused Kṛṣṇa's transformation into the form of Jagannātha.

The Oriyan poet Banamali sings, "O Jagannātha, Yaśodā's dear foster son, Your Rādhā is like the *chataka* bird, drinking only the pure raindrops You shower as Your grace."

In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa assumes the graceful three-fold bending form (*tribaṅga-lalitā*), and He wears a peacock feather and plays His flute. The *Jagannāthāṣṭakam* (verse 2) identifies Jagannātha with this mood: "In His left hand Lord Jagannātha holds a flute, on His head He wears peacock feathers, and on His hips He wears fine yellow silken cloth. From the corners of His eyes He bestows sidelong glances upon His loving devotees,

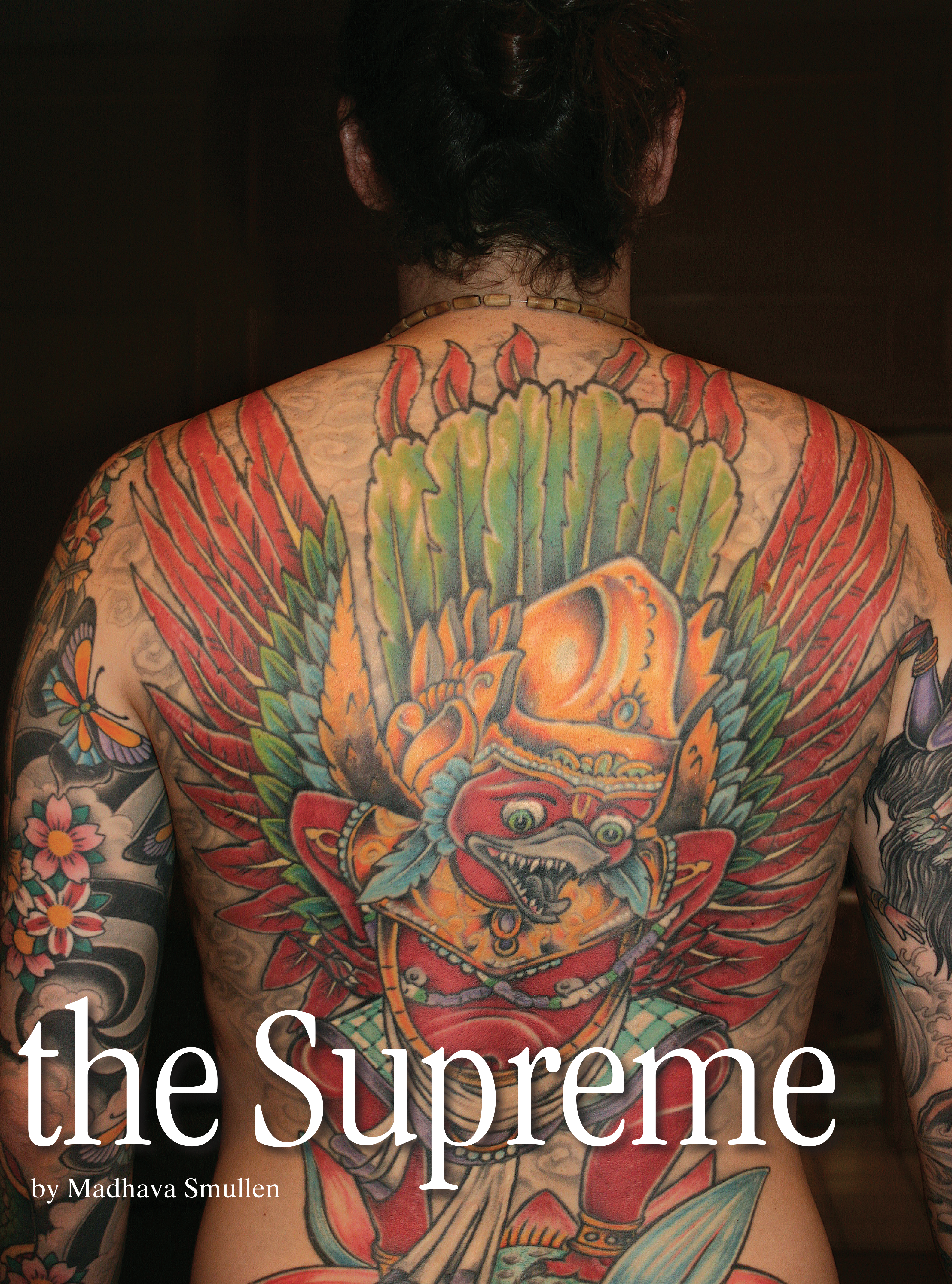
(*please turn to page 58*)

Yamarāja Dāsa



Are devotional tattoos taboo or a genuine Vaiṣṇava practice?

Inking with



the Supreme

by Madhava Smullen

TATTOOS HAVE BEEN inked permanently into modern culture. Walk down any busy city street and you'll spot a vast number of tattooees, ranging all the way from the young female professional with a butterfly on her shoulder blade to the wild punk rocker with hardly any space left for his white skin to shine. For some reason, having an unremovable image of a two-headed dragon eating its own face sprawled across their chest until their dying breath is an idea that appeals to a lot of people. National Geographic News reported in April 2000 that fifteen per cent of Americans were tattooed. That's around forty million people.

Now, surely a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee would be the last person you'd expect to see among those forty million, right?

Wrong. The fact is that many devotees sport tatoos, and their number is increasing. Is this a purely whimsical fad, or do our ancient traditions and scriptures hold any support for devotional tattooing?

Take a magnifying glass to Indian tribal traditions, and you uncover the first clues. For instance, certain tribes believe that Lord Rāma's greatest devotee, Hanumān, can be tattooed on a recurring dislocating shoulder to relieve the pain. The women of the nomadic Ribari tribe of Kutch in northwest India, one of the places the Pāṇḍavas visited during their exile, have many extremely elaborate tattoos. And the Ramnami community, scattered across the Indian states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, began a painful custom in the nineteenth century: they had the name of Rāma in Sanskrit tattooed on practically every inch of skin, even on their tongues and inside their lips. This practice was meant to protect them from bigoted caste-conscious *brāhmaṇas* they had angered by adopting brahminical customs, and is still carried on today.

So far, so tribal. But serious Vaiṣṇava practitioners will need more tangible scriptural endorsement before they start injecting ink into their skin.

A Burning Impression

Caturātmā Dāsa knows where to find this endorsement. A *pūjārī* at ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara temple in Alachua, Florida, he doesn't have tattoos on every inch of his skin. But he does have a healthy collection.

"I have three Sanskrit mantras, two on one arm and one on the other," he tells me with his trademark enthusiasm. "Two are in praise of Govardhana, my worshipable deity. The other one, for my protection, is Nṛsiṁha [Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation]. Then on each arm I also have Śrī Kumbha, the sacred pots used in fire sacrifices."

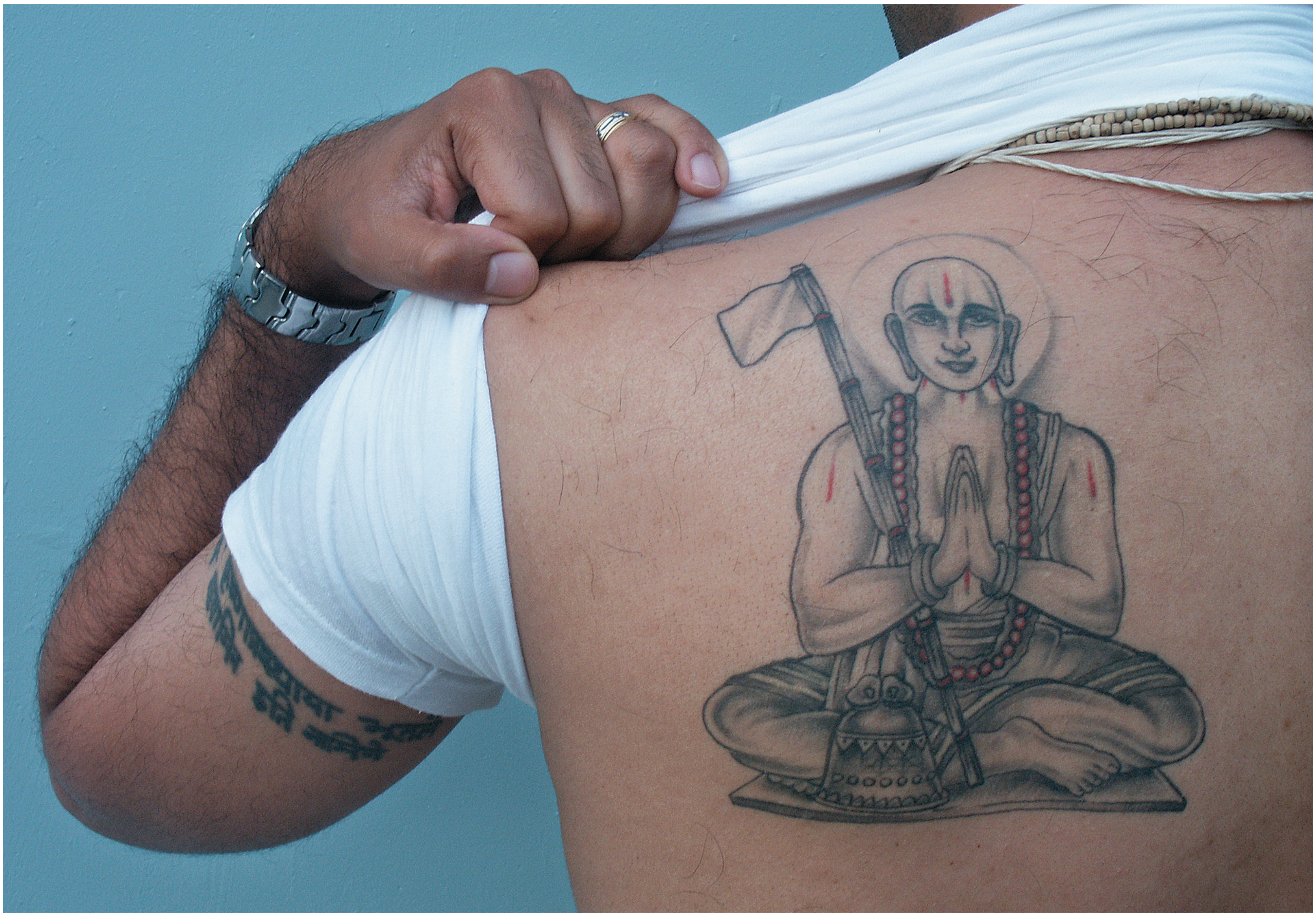
He has to pause for breath.

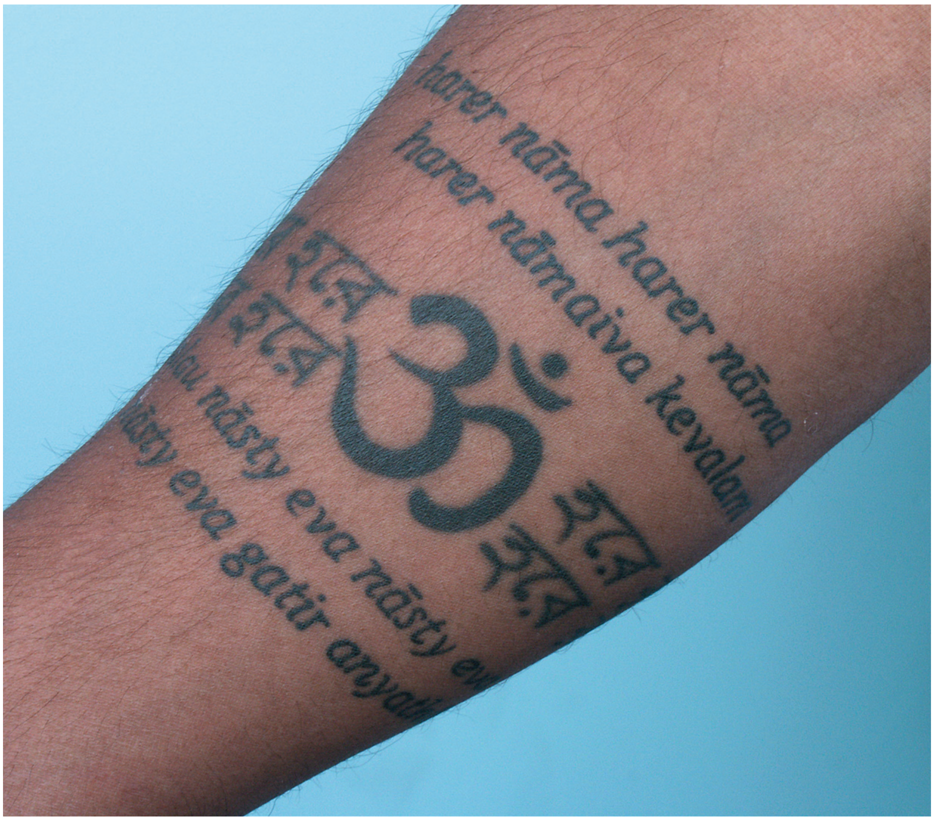
"On my back, I've got two of the greatest warriors in Vedic history—Arjuna on one side and Paraśurāma on the other. They're complemented by a fire sacrifice pit in between them, and they protect my back from any misfortune. Next, on my chest are two aspects of Kṛṣṇa's beauty—Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself and His dwarf incarnation, Vāmana."

As if this wasn't enough, his arms are also graced with tattoos of the four sacred symbols of Viṣṇu: club, disc, lotus, and conchshell.

"Not one of them was done on a whim. I spent four or five years charting them all out and doing careful research."

He grins.



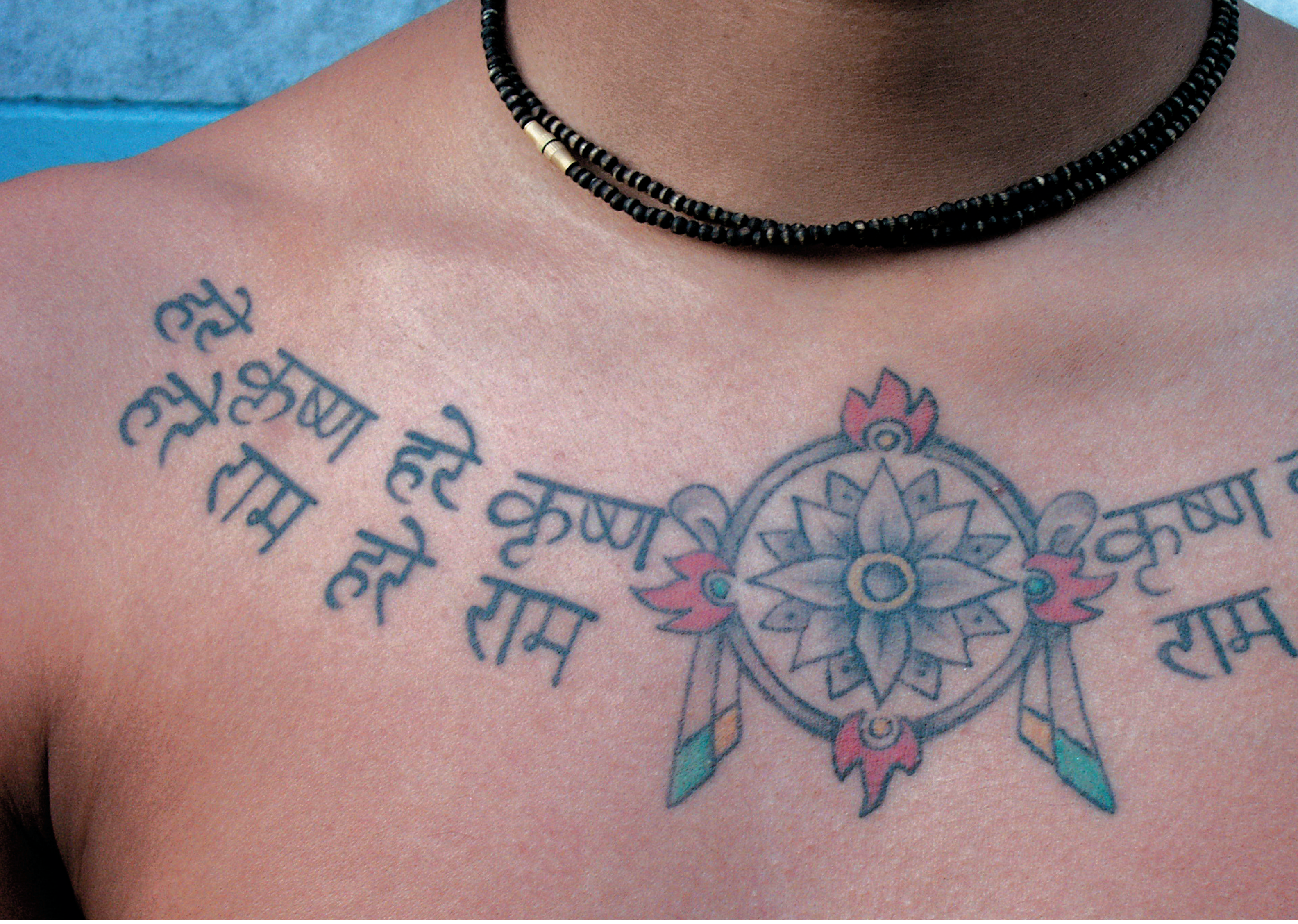


Far left: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Above: Śrī Rāmanujācārya. Left: oṁkara, *the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in Bengali, and a verse.*

"I'm a *pūjārī* and often walk around with my tattoos on full display. I'd better be able to explain them!"

Caturātmā concedes that the modern incarnation of tattooing wasn't around during or before the birth of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, but there are close parallels. In *Prameya Ratnāvalī,* the eighteenth-century Vaiṣṇava commentator Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa cites five purificatory processes (*pañca-saṁskāra*) that, along with spiritual initiation, bring one direct perception of Lord Kṛṣṇa: austerity, wearing *tilaka,* performing sacrifices, accepting a new name at initiation, and chanting mantras glorifying the Lord.

Baladeva's elaboration is surprising: "In this verse, the word *austerity* means to accept the branded marks



of Lord Viṣṇu: the disc, lotus, conch, and mace"—the very images Caturātmā has tattooed on his arms.

Like tattooing, branding is permanent, and yes, very painful.

A tradition that goes back to at least A.D. 1017, it's still practiced today by followers of both Madhvācārya and Rāmānujācārya, mainly in the South Indian states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. What's more, for Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, Rāmānujā's followers, it's an essential part of the initiation process.

Picture this:

It's morning, and the air is cool. As the sun rises behind you and the birds start to twitter, your heart beats fast but you sit quietly, staring at the blazing sacrificial pit in front of you. A married priest performs the fire ceremony. Offering oblations, he invokes the *ayudha-devatās,* personified forms of Lord Viṣṇu's sacred weapons.

Metal stamps in the traditional shape of each weapon are then attached to metal poles and held within the dancing flames. After some time, your guru takes them and taps them on a plate. You watch, knowing that this is to make sure no loose pieces of hot charcoal come off on your skin. Finally, he begins to chant the mantra for Sudarśana, Lord Viṣṇu's discus. It's time. You tense. You feel the red hot brand press against your right shoulder, burning, stinging. Then the Pañcajanya mantra is chanted, and the symbol of Viṣṇu's conchshell is branded on your left shoulder. You sigh. It's over.

You are now ready for the rest of your initiation ceremony.

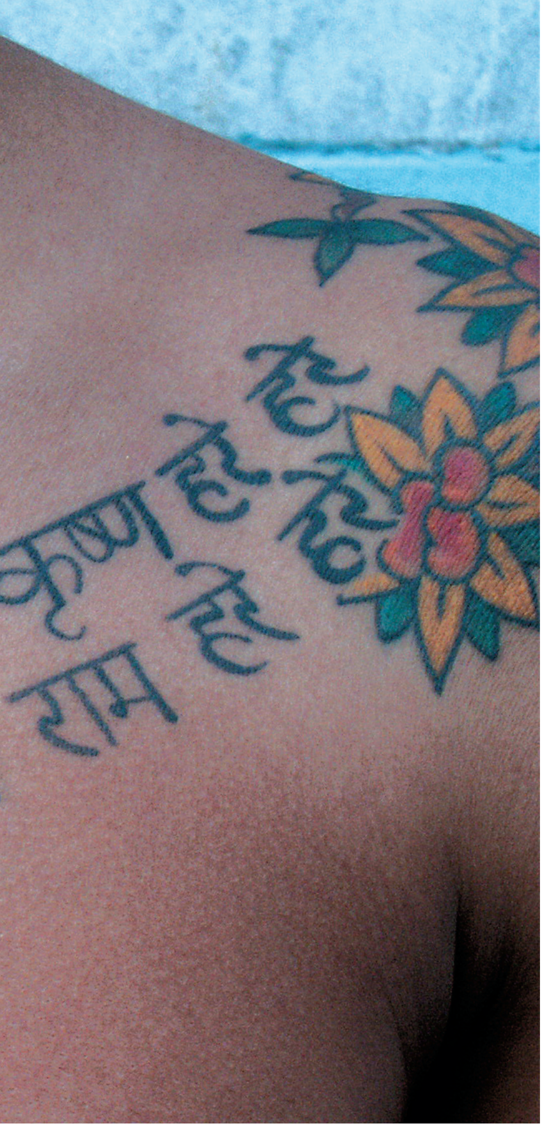
Fortunately for us, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the *ācāryas* in His line have recommended that one use *tilaka* clay instead of branding to draw Viṣṇu's symbols on the body. So if you're on the list for spiritual initiation, no need to scream and run—no Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava guru will try to press a red-hot iron pole against your arm during the ceremony.

The Sacred Clay Connection

Branding gets its fair amount of exposure in our traditions and scriptures. But it's *tilaka*—Caitanya Mahāprabhu's recommended alternative—that presents our closest parallel to tattooing.

Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava is aware of the virtues of wearing *tilaka,* or sacred clay. The u-shaped mark and oval worn on the forehead is one of our most instantly recognizable symbols.

But what you may be surprised to learn is that Vaiṣṇava scriptures also contain instructions to write the holy names with *tilaka*—and even to draw pictures on the

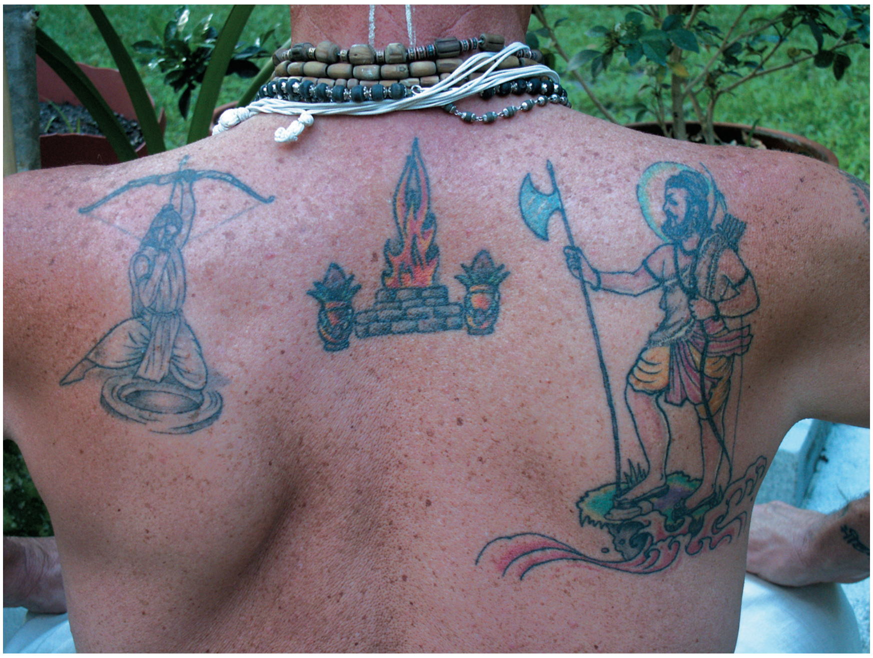


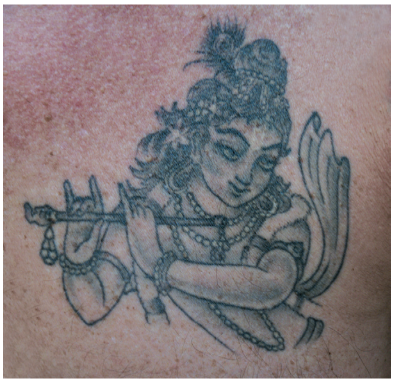
body with it. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* which contains the complete science of *bhakti-yoga,* Rūpa Gosvāmī tells us, "In marking such *tilaka,* sometimes one may write Hare Kṛṣṇa on the body." And elsewhere in the same book, he quotes the *Skanda Purāṇa* on a benefit of wearing *tilaka:* "Persons whose bodies are marked with *tilaka,* symbolizing the conchshell, wheel, club, and lotus . . . even seen once can help the seer be relieved from all sinful activities."

In *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* compiled by Rūpa's brother Sanātana, Lord Viṣṇu states: "I enter within the hearts of those devotees who, in the age of Kali, decorate their bodies with drawings of My incarnations, such as Matsya and Kūrma . . . Those who wear the drawings of My incarnations on their bodies are not ordinary human beings—they exist on the same platform as My incarnations."

Discussing the subject in great detail, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* continues to enforce its point for over fifty verses, even going so far as to suggest, "If a fallen *brāhmaṇa* does not decorate his body with *tilaka,* as well as drawings of a conch shell and disc, then the king should put him on the back of a donkey and drive him out of his kingdom."

Fair enough. But as you're spurring your donkey on into the sunset, you may want to ask, "Is all this really that important?"





Top left: the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in Sanskrit. Left and above: Caturātma Dāsa and some of his body art.

Internal Matters

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura certainly had an opinion.

In his 1885 essay *Pancha Samskara: The Process of Initiation,* he discusses the five purificatory processes from *Prameya Ratnāvalī* mentioned earlier in this article, two of which are *tapa* (defined by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa as branding) and wearing *tilaka* markings.

Yes, he acknowledges them as prescribed ways to sanctify oneself so that one's true spiritual nature can develop. But far more forcefully, he condemns being concerned only with the external: "*Tapa* applies not only to the body, but also to the mind and the soul. If it is only physical, in the form of branding or stamping, then *tapa* has not actually taken place and religious practice becomes hypocritical."

He continues emphasizing the hollowness of such an approach: "Externally the student looks good, but internally there is nothing. The symbols of divine conch, disc, and the name of Hari [Kṛṣṇa] mark the body. The tongue utters the name of Hari, and worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* or the deity with mantra is performed, but the student is addicted to endless sinful practices."

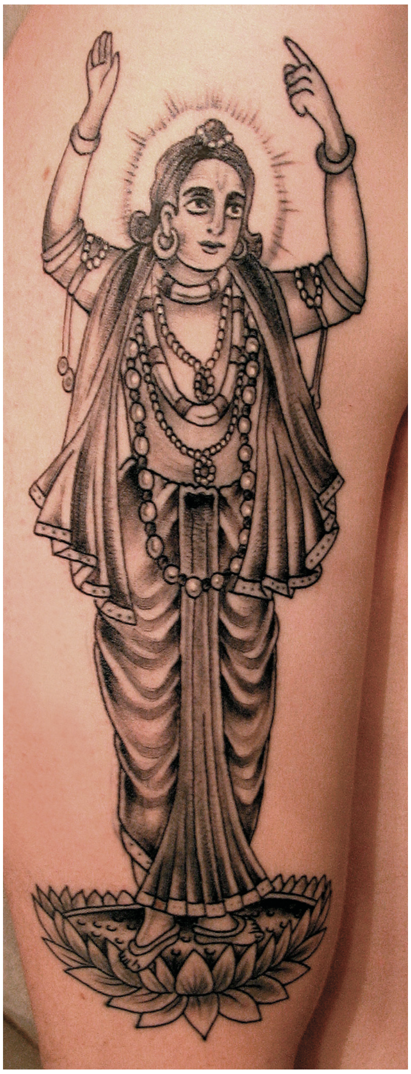
Real devotion in the heart overrides just looking like a devotee and apparently acting like one. Wear *tilaka* just for show and it'll do little for your progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The same goes for devotional tattoos. They can become an obsession, a dangerous distraction. Wear them, however, with the right mood, meditation, and intentions, and they become powerful tools in Kṛṣṇa's service.

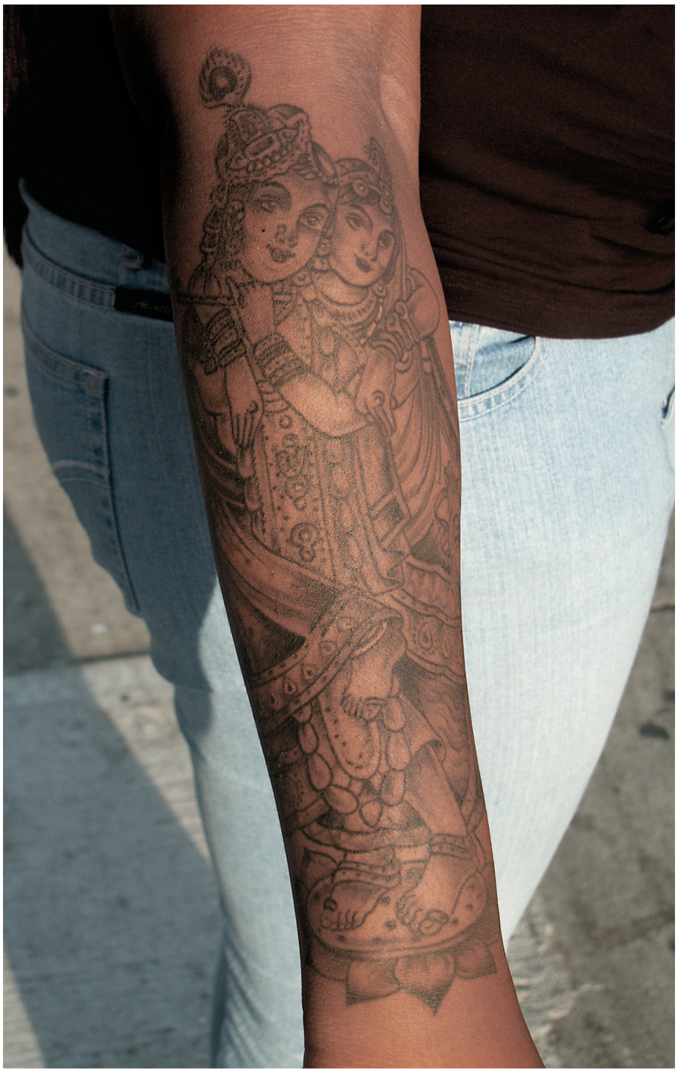
Lakṣmīmaṇī Dāsī, recently retired headmistress of the Vaiṣṇava Academy for Girls in Alachua, agrees.

"We're supposed to do everything to remind us of Kṛṣṇa. So if we're getting a tattoo for another

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे

Below left: Lord Śiva. Right: Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Far right: Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Below right: Vṛndāvana forest scene.





NARAYAN GOPAL

reason, then we have to examine our motives."

Her single tattoo, the words *Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* in Sanskrit Devanagari script beneath a lotus flower, reflects her "less is more" outlook.

"Samosas are delicious, but if you eat four hundred of them, you get sick. So if something material like a tattoo helps you to remember Kṛṣṇa, it can be used in Kṛṣṇa's service, but if it's used in excess, then it becomes an end in itself."

Lakṣmīmaṇī says her tattoo, a birthday present from her daughter, does its job.

"I wanted something that had Kṛṣṇa on it so that I would never be able to forget Him, so that He'd be with me all the time. And that's what happened. I guess it's just part of me now."

What's more, her tattoo doesn't benefit her alone.

"People approach me constantly to ask me what it is and what it says, because it's in Sanskrit. It's a great excuse to tell them about Kṛṣṇa."

Caturātmā Dāsa has had the same experience.

"Once I was doing some yardwork at a devotee friend's house. Since it was a hot summer's day, I wasn't wearing a shirt, and all my tattoos were on full display. Suddenly, a delivery van pulled up, and as it came closer, I saw the wording on its side: 'Bill's Home Delivery Shrimp and Fresh-Cut Meats. Wholesale to your door.'

" 'Uh, oh,' I thought, 'He doesn't realize where he's just pulled into.' So I walked over to the car, and the passenger window came down. It was an old guy who had obviously lived in the area for years. 'How you doin' there, sir,' he says. 'I'm just going around door to door selling these shr—"

BODY
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GOES AROUND
COMES ARO

The shoulder is a popular spot for tattoos. Above and right: Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa at work in his studio. Opposite page, clockwise from upper left: Jagannātha butterflies, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Ananta Śeṣa, Govinda, "Hare Kṛṣṇa," Gopāla Kṛṣṇa with sun.

Caturātmā freezes dramatically.

"Suddenly the guy stops in mid-sentence. 'Oh,' he says, 'I can see by your tattoos you're not gonna be interested in what I'm selling. I might as well just take my truck on down the road to the next house. You're one of those Hare Kṛṣṇa people, and I know you guys are vegetarian and don't eat meat.'"

As Caitanya Mahāprabhu once said, "A Vaiṣṇava is he who, when seen, reminds one of Kṛṣṇa."

So. Let's say you've thought about it. Let's say you've decided that getting a Kṛṣṇa conscious tattoo is a bona fide way to express your devotion, to remind yourself and others of Kṛṣṇa.

What next?

Come into My Tattoo Parlor

Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa works at Ron's Tattoos in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He got his first tattoo at fifteen, inspired by the Cro Mags, a Hare Kṛṣṇa straightedge band and tattoo aficionados. A professional tattoo artist for over fifteen years, he's tattooed close to one hundred devotees.

His first piece of advice is to-the-point straight talk.

"Whatever tattoo you're getting, just make sure it's something you'll be happy living with. Because it's gonna stay with your body longer than you will."

When it comes to artwork, he is partial to that of Gujarati artist B. G. Sharma.

"His style practically already looks like tattoos. Everything has an outline, and his shading is similar to the way I'd shade or color a tattoo. It's really easy to replicate."

Besides Sharma's devotional depictions of Kṛṣṇa, Kalpavṛkṣa has tattooed devotees with a variety of images, the most popular being the *mahā-mantra* and Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva. Then there are the more unusual ones, of course.

"One *sannyāsī,* Bhakti Viśrambha Mādhava Mahārāja, got tattoos of all thirteen *tilaka* marks, including one on the back of his head, along with the corresponding mantras in Sanskrit. And I can't forget my friend Jack, who's been a devotee for a few years now. He has a huge Garuḍa covering his entire back, from his waist up to his neck."

But like Lakṣmīmaṇī, Kalpavṛkṣa thinks that the best kind of tattoo a devotee can get is one with a built-in conversation starter.

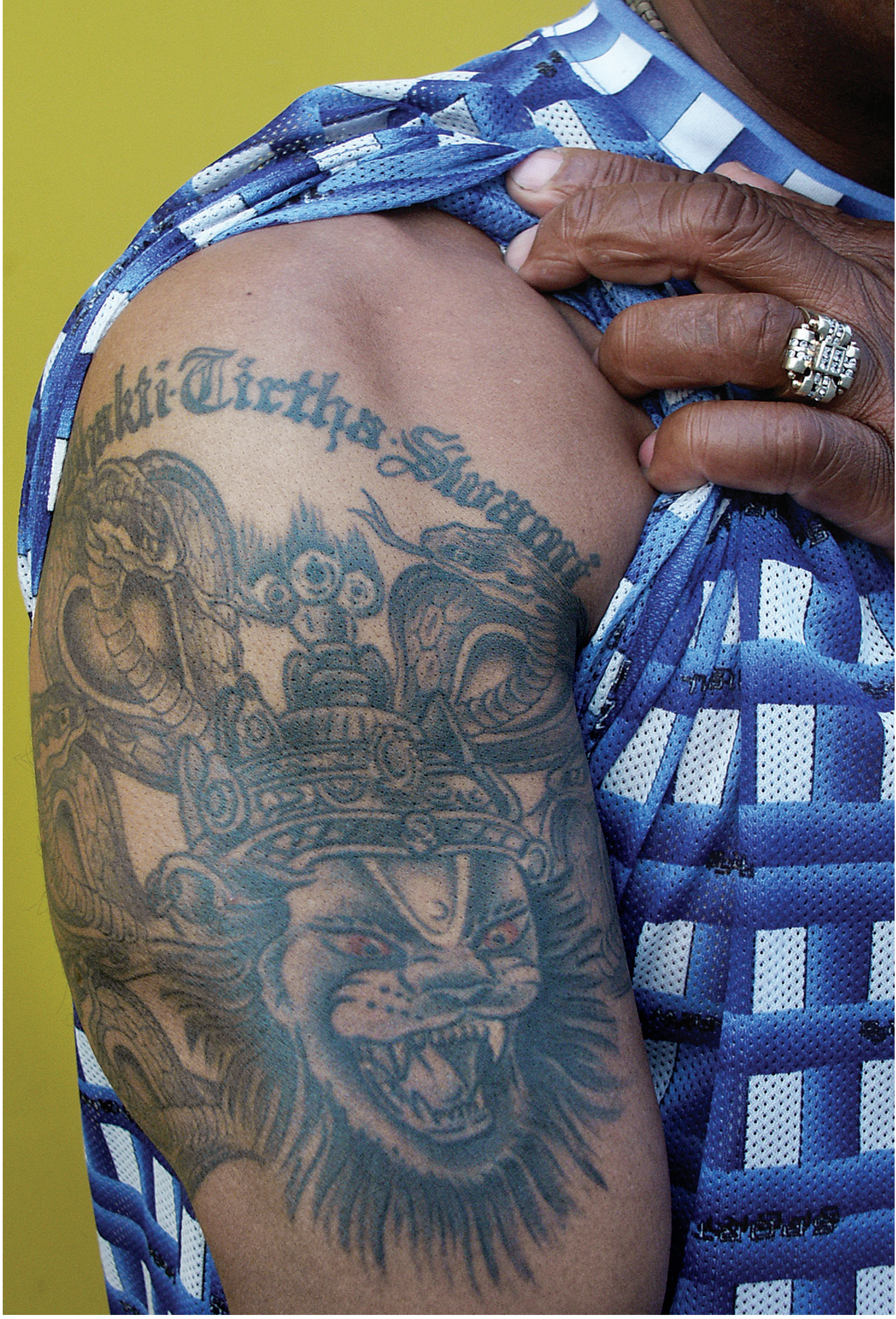
"I have the *mahā-mantra* tattooed in Bengali all over both of my arms, which is unique and completely unfamiliar to the average person. When people see it, they never fail to ask what it is."

This happens so often that Kalpa keeps a stack of Śrīla Prabhupāda's small books handy at all times.

"I'll tell clients what my tattoo is and what it means. Then if they seem interested, I'll explain the *mahā-mantra* and a little about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And eventually, if their interest deepens, I'll hand them a book. I try to build a rapport with people. You can't just hit them with everything all at once."

Recent times, however, have brought on a new experience: Sometimes Kalpavṛkṣa finds himself asking people about their Vedic tattoos.

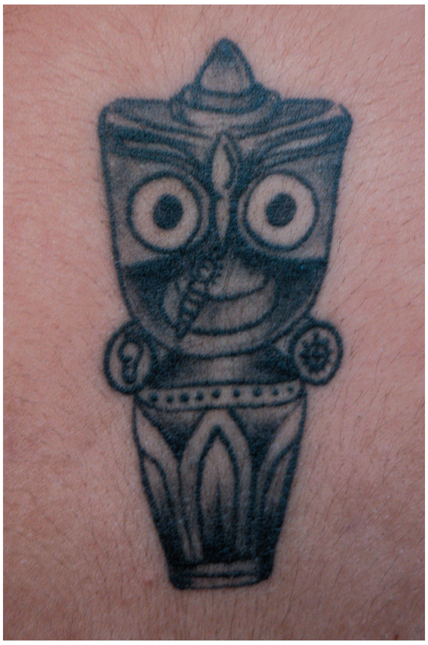
"Modern Western tattooing has a heavy Asian influence, mainly from the two-hundred-year-old Japanese tradition. But in the past ten to twelve years, there's been a huge rush of interest in Indian imagery. Yoga is really big these days, and students are often influenced to get tattoos of mantras and various symbols like the *oṁ* sign. One girl walked into my tattoo shop sporting tattoos of different yogic *āsanas.*"



There are more signs of this Vedic tattoo invasion everywhere. Pick up any modern tattoo magazine released within the past five to ten years, and you'll find either an image directly related to Kṛṣṇa, or something from the Vedic paradigm. The goddesses Kālī, Durgā, and Lakṣmī flood tattoo parlors, as does Lord Śiva. Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva rears His fearsome head from the pages of tattoo magazines, and the friendly, easily identifiable face of Lord Jagannātha becomes more and more popular. Tattoo stores across the United States keep their own copy of the *Kṛṣṇa Art* book. Kṛṣṇa, in the form of art, is gradually infiltrating the tattoo-wearing public.

But for now, He still remains most popular with those who hold Him deep within their hearts. ✿

Madhava Smullen grew up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Ireland. He now serves on the editorial staff of Back to Godhead. *He does not have any tattoos.*



Clockwise from upper left: Lord Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva, Garūḍa, Lord Jagannātha, Lord Kṛṣṇa and calf.

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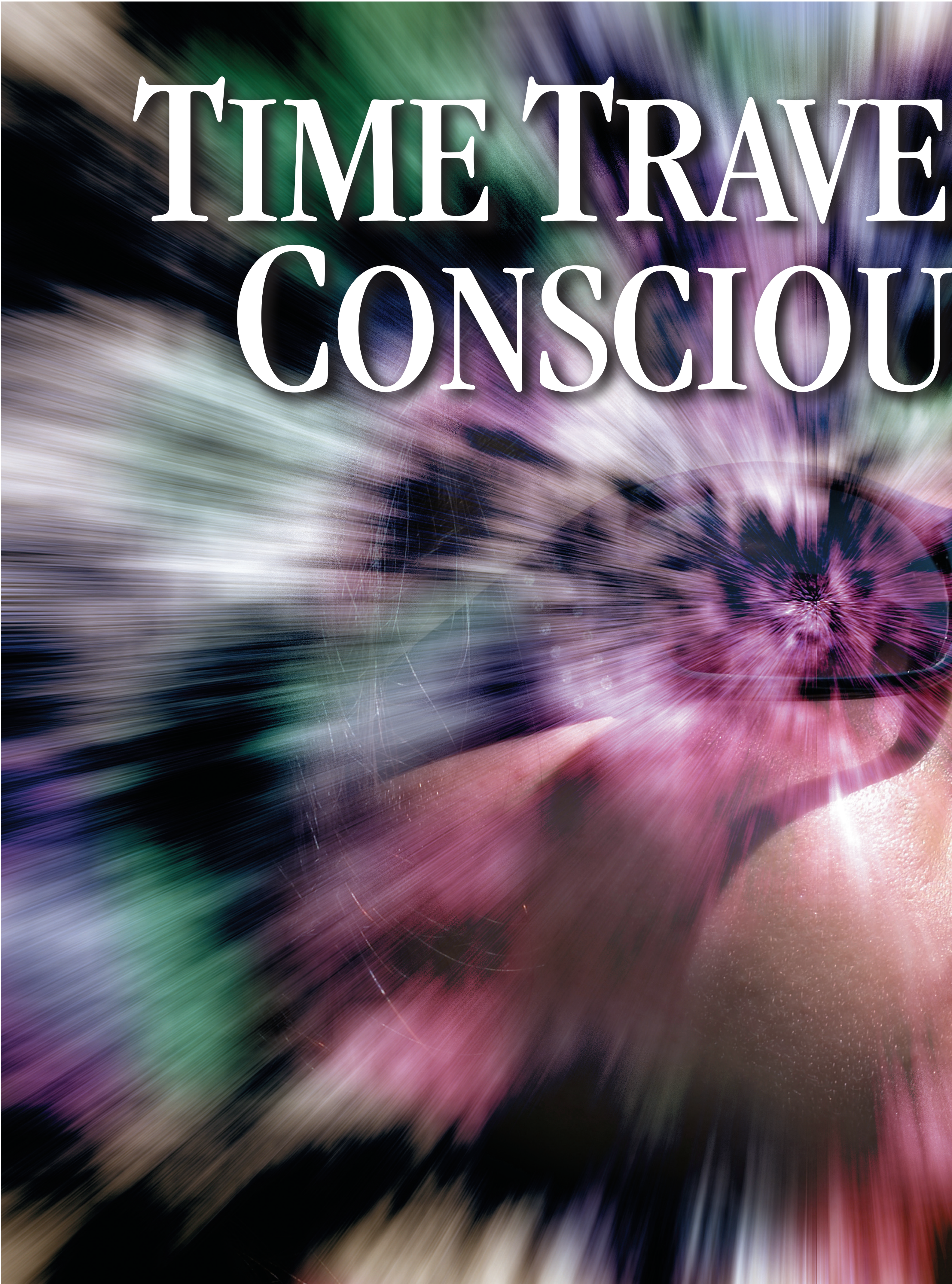

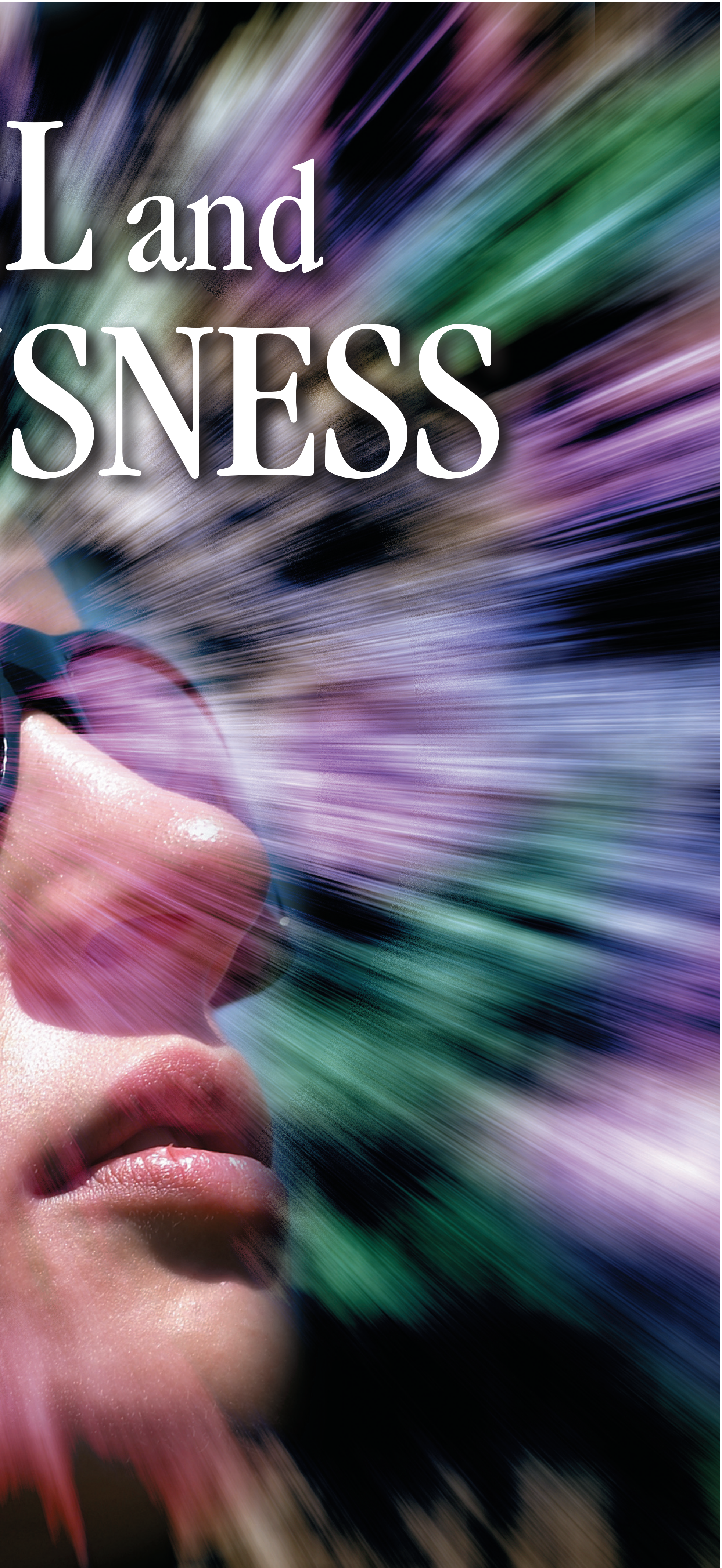

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Is time travel possible? Both Einstein and the Vedic literature have an answer.

by Sadāpūta Dāsa

IN 1898 H. G. WELLS published his famous story of the time machine—a machine that would enable a human time traveler to visit any desired time in the past or future. We have no idea how this fictional machine might have worked, but people have spent a great deal of time and effort to see if traveling through time might actually be possible. It turns out that some forms of time travel were contemplated in the Purāṇic traditions of India, and that empirical evidence pointing to possible time travel can be found both in modern physics and in the study of paranormal phenomena.

What is time? Generally we think of time as passing or flowing from past to future. We think that the future has not yet come to be and the past has ceased to exist. Only the present is real, and that reality shifts from moment to fleeting moment. So where can a time traveler go if only the present exists?

Einstein's special theory of relativity provides an answer to this question. To see how, consider a diagram in which space is represented by the *x*-axis and time is plotted on the vertical axis (see Figures 1–2). A horizontal line at a certain level represents a given moment of time, with the future above the line and the past below it. In Newtonian physics, if an observer moves uniformly relative to us, a moment of time for that observer is still represented by a horizontal line. But in the theory of relativity, a moment for a moving observer is represented by a tilted line that partly lies in our future and partly lies in our past. This implies that our past

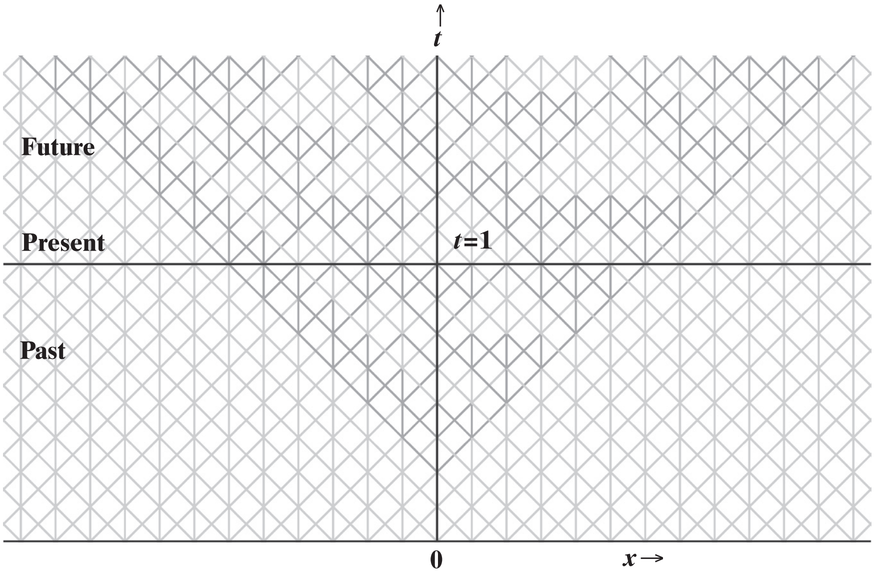

Figure 1—The history of events unfolding in a one-dimensional world. *The* x*-axis measures space and the* t*-axis, extending vertically, measures time. The units are chosen so that the speed of light is unity. The shaded gray lines represent interactions that propagate outward at the speed of light, at most.*

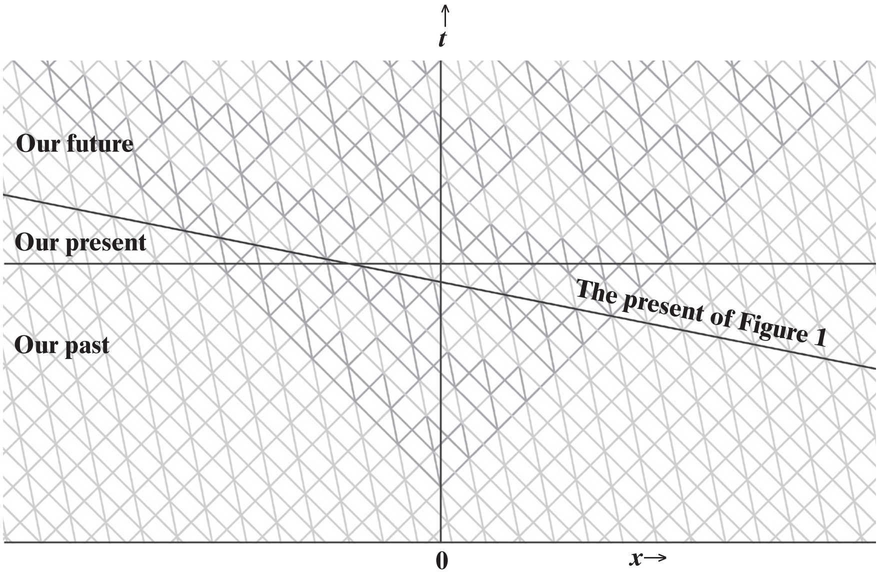

Figure 2—The effect of moving at 20% of the speed of light. *As in Figure 1, a horizontal line of t = constant represents our present. However, the line of the present in Figure 1 is now tilted so that part of it is in our future and part is in our past.*

and future must be real since they lie in the present of various moving observers. As Einstein put it when consoling the widow of a deceased friend, "For us who are convinced physicists, the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, however persistent."

Thus the special theory of relativity implies that all moments of material time are, so to speak, frozen in timeless existence. This may make it hard to understand the apparent passage of time, but it does provide places for time travelers to visit.

Einstein's special theory of relativity was followed by his general theory of relativity. The general theory not only allows destinations for time travelers, but in principle it allows for pathways they might follow to reach these destinations. For example, the famous mathematician Kurt Godel once used Einstein's theory to formulate a mathematical model of a rotating universe that allowed closed timelike loops (see Figures 3–4). These are paths through space and time in which the direction to the future curves around so that the future merges with the past. If one could follow such a path in a spaceship, one would eventually loop back into one's own past.

Paradoxes of Time Travel

When we contemplate travel from the present to the past, we immediately run into paradoxes or contradictions. For example, there is the famous grandfather paradox. If a traveler goes back in time and kills his grandfather before his grandfather meets his grandmother, then the time traveler will never be born and therefore cannot kill his grandfather.

One way to deal with such paradoxes is to introduce multiple universes into the picture. Suppose that when you go back to kill your grandfather, you kill him in a parallel universe that is nearly the same as this one but contains a deceased grandfather rather than a living one. We can eliminate contradictions by allowing events altered by time travel to work themselves out in various parallel universes. This can be done in the context of the "multiple worlds" (or Everett-Wheeler-Graham) interpretation of quantum mechanics, in which the universe continually splits into multiple copies corresponding to the different possible outcomes of random quantum events. The quantum physicist David Deutsch developed a theory of time travel along these lines.

All of these ideas about time travel are set in the context of the theory of relativity, which posits a static space-time world in which there is no passage of time. If the passage of time is truly an illusion, then the question arises of who or what is deluded. This leads to two questions: What is consciousness, and How does consciousness fit into the space-time picture?

Many scientific discussions of consciousness assume that consciousness is "nothing but" patterns

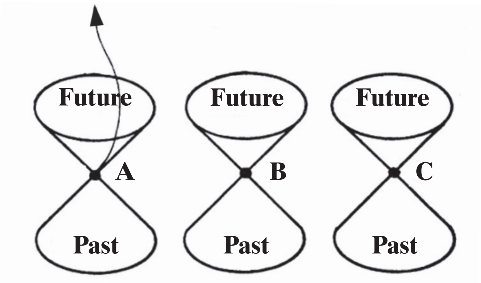

Figure 3—Time in the theory of relativity. *In this diagram, time is plotted vertically and the x and y axes of space are plotted horizontally. The possible future interactions stemming from A lie in the cone (called a light cone) extending up from A, and the possible past events leading up to A lie in the downward-extending cone. The same is true of B and C. This is the same as in Figure 1, except that the y-axis has been added.*

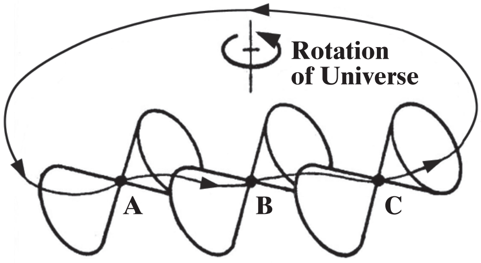

Figure 4—A closed time-like loop. *In a rotating universe the light cones tilt, as shown in the diagram. If the tilt is strong enough, the future of A lies in the past of B, and so on, going around in a circle. As a result, the future of A loops around into its past.*

of matter in the brain, involving neurons, synaptic connections, and various kinds of molecules. However, philosophers such as David Chalmers of the University of Arizona have argued that such ideas avoid the "hard problem of consciousness," which is to explain how it is that we have experience at all. Consider a person looking at an apple and experiencing the redness of its surface. What is this experience of redness? Complex patterns of electro-chemical reactions may be manifest within the brain, but this tells us nothing about experience. After all, most brain activity occurs on a completely unconscious level. Why does any of it give rise to experience?

Chalmers proposes that in addition to material interactions there is an element of conscious experience that cannot be understood in material terms. He argues that even though conscious experience is not reducible to matter, such experience is linked in a one-to-one fashion with high-order cognitive processing in the brain.

Let us pursue Chalmers's idea. Although conscious contents may correspond to abstract patterns in the physical body, they clearly correspond only to a small and varying subset of these patterns. There must therefore be some agency that chooses this subset and keeps consciousness linked to it during the period of conscious bodily activity. This agency cannot be strictly material, since it links something nonmaterial with something material. Thus we can formulate the connection between consciousness and matter as:

Consciousness ←(agency)→
Material patterns

Many spiritual traditions have taught that consciousness (the *cit* potency in Vedic teaching) is beyond time. According to the theory of relativity, matter exists as a time-less pattern in space-time. Thus the agency in the above formula links two timeless entities, consciousness and matter, and causes conscious entities to experience events in time.

We can see how this might work by studying a well-known example of time travel. Imagine two twins. One twin stays on the earth, while the other travels into space on a rocket at nearly the speed of light and then returns. We observe that the twin on the rocket has experienced less time than the one who stayed home. Thus the traveling twin could experience a trip of, say, one hour and return to earth after a period of millions of years of earth time.

The difference between the two twins is that one of them accelerated in the rocket, whereas the other did not experience this acceleration. The physical interactions in the traveling twin's body follow the same pattern as those in the body of the stay-at-home twin, but the motion of the rocket causes them to be stretched in space and time. If the hypothetical linking agency is concerned with the patterns of events while ignoring the stretching, then we would expect the traveler's consciousness to be similar to that of his sedentary twin but stretched over a long time span.

In the twin paradox, time travel into the future was achieved through the motion of the rocket. A similar time distortion occurs in a gravitational field. Imagine that one twin

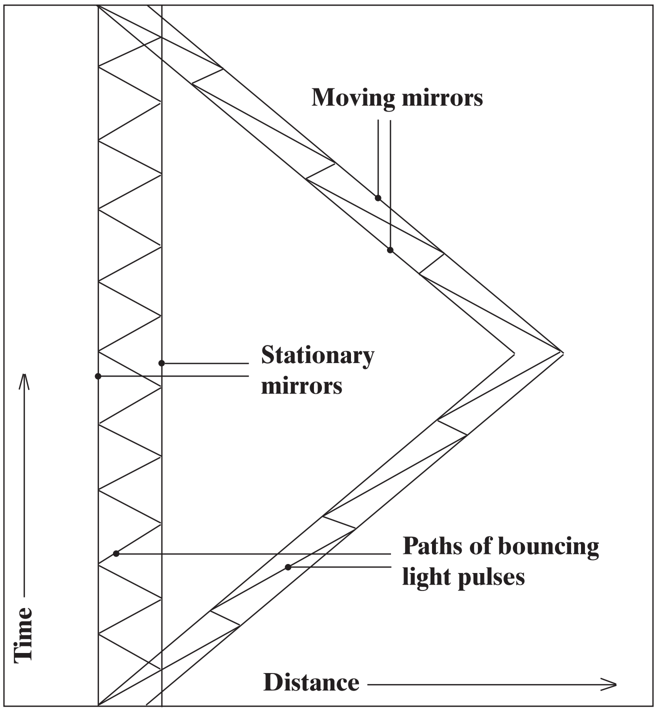

Figure 5—The twin paradox in Einstein's theory of relativity. *The time, as measured by pulses of light bouncing between mirrors, is greater when the mirrors are stationary than when they move at close to the speed of light.*

stays far away from a very massive planet, while the other twin travels close to it and comes back. Here the traveling twin will experience a shorter time interval than the twin who stayed away from the planet.

King Kakudmi's Journey

An interesting story in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) parallels this form of the twin paradox. In this story, a king named Kakudmi visited the planet of Brahmā and waited for a musical performance to finish before having an audience with him. Brahmā told him that while he was waiting, 27 x 4,320,000 years had elapsed on earth and the king's civilization had completely passed away.

> ***There is a kind of signaling into the past that has been observed empirically but is not accepted by mainstream science.***

In another story, Brahmā visited the earth to steal Kṛṣṇa's cowherd friends, went home for a moment of his time, and then returned. One year had elapsed on earth. A "moment," or *truti,* is 1/33,750 of a second, according to the *Sūrya-siddhānta.* On this basis, an earth year is 1/33,750 of a second of Brahmā. The number of Brahmā's seconds in 27 x 4,320,000 earth years should come to 27 x 4,320,000 /33,750 = 3,456 seconds, or nearly one hour. Thus the two stories are consistent, since a musical performance could easily be about this long.

If consciousness is "glued" to patterns of events in fixed space-time, then it would appear that all events are determined and there is no possibility of free will. It turns out, however, that if purely random events can be reconciled with fixed space-time, then so can free will. We have seen that a random event can be represented as a splitting of the universe into two or more parallel universes in which the various random alternatives are manifest. According to quantum theory, vast numbers of random events are always taking place, and thus the universe must be continuously splitting into vast numbers of divergent copies.

This scenario also allows for free will. At a fork in the universe, the conscious entity has the opportunity to make a choice between alternative courses of events. If we posit that conscious entities have the innate power to make such choices, then they will be able to act according to their will within the framework of physical circumstances determined by the laws of physics and their previous choices. Life histories develop as tracks through branching patterns of space-time. If a given timeless conscious entity is connected to a particular path through the fixed space-time tree, then the entity will experience events consistent with the passage of time at each moment along its path. This will create the persistent illusion of time's passage mentioned by Einstein.

Going Back in Time

Travel into the future is possible according to modern physics, but travel into the past is more problematic. Godel's rotating model universe is quite different from our own, and closed timelike loops are difficult to bring about in any universe obeying known physical laws.

One possibility is to send messages into the past instead of actually traveling there physically. Scientists have examined various ways of sending a signal into the past, but unfortunately none of them seem feasible. Ironically, however, there is a kind of signaling into the past that has been observed empirically but is not accepted by mainstream science.

This takes place in what is known as precognitive remote viewing. In a remote-viewing experiment, one person (the percipient) stays in a room and tries to describe what is being seen by another person (the agent), who has traveled to a remote site. Thousands of experiments of this kind have been performed. For example, at Princeton University an extensive series of successful remote-viewing experiments was carried out under the direction of Robert Jahn, one-time head of the Princeton School of Engineering. The surprising feature of these results is that percipients were able to obtain information equally well from the past, present, or future—an ability known in Sanskrit literature as *tri-kāla-jña* ("three times knowing").

In summary, the idea of time travel can be consistently developed in the context of the theory of relativity and the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. At the same time, the theory of relativity provides a framework for understanding how timeless consciousness and the timeless physical continuum could be linked to allow for the experience of time. The many-worlds theory, in turn, reconciles Einstein's timeless space-time with random events, and a similar reconciliation (in which free choice selects branches) provides a way in which free will can operate in a world obedient to physical laws. So by exploring the idea of time travel, we are led to an understanding of more fundamental issues involving consciousness and matter. As a final note, the phenomenon of remote viewing suggests that time travel may be more than just an idea.

Sadāpūta Dāsa (Richard L. Thompson) earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Cornell University. He is the author of several books dealing with the relationship between modern science and Vedic knowledge.

SOULFUL SCIENCE

(*continued from page 27*)

> mark the advancement of science. But no matter how much science advances, they will not be able to find the soul. The soul's presence can simply be accepted on circumstantial understanding, for you will find in the Vedic literature that the dimension of the soul is one ten-thousandth the size of a point. Therefore, it is not possible for the material scientists to capture the soul. You can simply accept the soul's existence by taking it from higher authorities. What the greatest scientists are now finding to be true, we've explained long ago.

What would be the advantage of such research? Śrīla Prabhupāda answers:

> As soon as one understands the existence of the soul, he can immediately understand the existence of God. The difference between God and the soul is that God is a very great soul, and the living entity is a very small soul; but qualitatively they are equal. God is all-pervading, and the living entity is localized. But the nature and quality are the same.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains the eternal nature of the soul. He specifically says that there was never a time when He did not exist, and He says this is true of all living beings, including you and me. He further informs us that we will not cease to be in the future. This obviously refers to the soul, for the body will surely perish. The embodied soul, Kṛṣṇa informs us, continually passes from boyhood to youth to old age, which are like several different bodies in this one lifetime. In the same way, the soul enters another body at the time of death.

Kṛṣṇa says, "That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul. . . . For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain. . . . As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.17, 2.20, 2.22)

So, the body dwindles and dies but the soul does not: our actual self simply changes forms, giving up prior bodies as snakes shed their skin.

Of course, realizing this truth takes more than scientific knowhow. It takes spiritual practice: If you want to realize that you're a soul, you have to act like a soul. The natural state of the soul is to be eternally glorifying God. By engaging in such glorification now under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master—who has realized his spiritual identity—the soul gradually removes the covering of illusion and becomes "reacquainted" with the actual self, the person beyond the body. This is the science of the soul.

But conventional science knows nothing of these matters. In fact, the scientific community is often antagonistic to spiritual views, and "the new atheism"—a movement that arrogantly calls itself "the Brights" (as opposed to those dimwitted theists)—is becoming more prominent as the years wear on. Recent bestselling books, such as Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* and Christopher Hitchens's *God Is Not Great,* are taking the literary world by storm. Atheism sells books.

Still, as I have shown, a parallel universe of scientists and scholars supporting a theistic worldview now exists alongside the literature of disbelief. For every Dawkins or Hitchens, there is a Patrick Glynn (*God: The Evidence*), affiliated with Harvard, or a Peter Forest (*God Without the Supernatural: A Defense of Scientific Theism*), from Cornell. While the Brights seem to think they can disprove all religious contentions with science and reason, these latter authors stand up to them every bit of the way and offer convincing counterevidence.

The recent spate of books and conferences, as highlighted in that issue of *U.S. News and World Report,* shows hope. Indeed, in recent years, the scientific community has taken bold steps toward understanding the person as a whole, not just as the material body. To cite yet another prominent example, Andrew Newberg, a professor of nuclear medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, directs his university's recently founded Center for Spirituality and the Mind, an interdisciplinary program exploring "neuro-theology," lauded by scientists around the world. His work tells us that if religion can learn something valuable about the body and mind from science, then science should be able to re-learn something from religion about the deepest levels of who we really are. That's something Prabhupāda would deeply appreciate, and something that benefits us all.

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.

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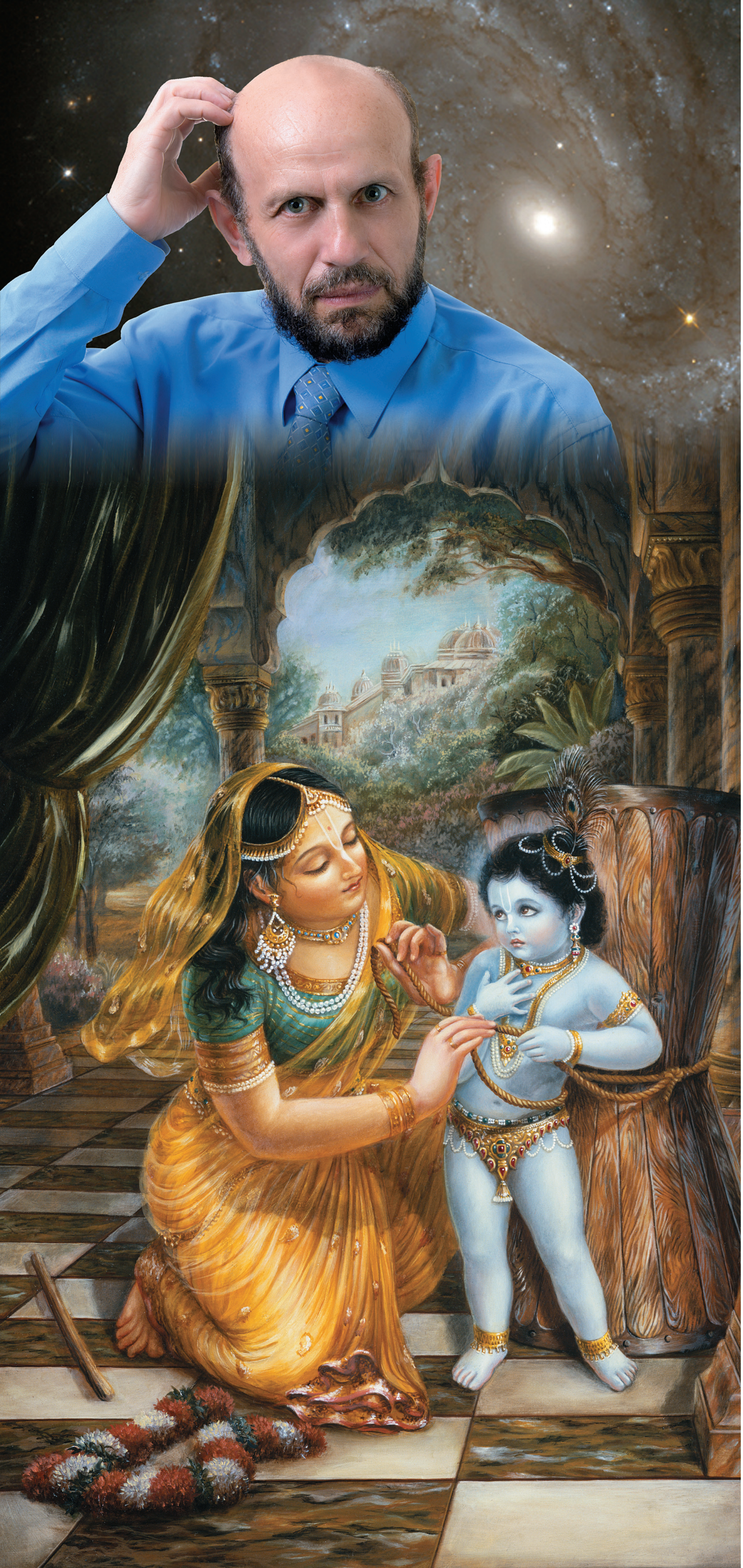

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“Two” Short

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s Dāmodara past
our great intellects will take us

by Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

THIS ISSUE of *Back to Godhead* comes out during the month of Dāmodara (October 27–November 24), associated with the Dāmodara-līlā, the pastime in which Kṛṣṇa’s mother, Yaśodā, tried to tie Him up with a rope. The rope turned out to be two fingers short. She added rope, but no matter how many ropes she tied together, the combined rope remained two fingers short.

This pastime signifies that no matter how much we try, we will always fall short in our attempts to understand God with our intelligence alone. Science is finding the same about the universe, which the Vedic literature says is a product of God’s super intelligence. Centuries of cosmological research have increased scientific information but not scientific understanding, because of “two” unexpected shortcomings:

1. The more scientists know, the more they realize how little they know. Scientists “conquered” space —and realized how little they actually knew about it. To the uninformed, space missions proved

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to Rope the Universe

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human greatness. To the well informed, they showed human smallness. Space research reveals that the universe contains more celestial bodies than all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world and our earth is just one of these cosmic grains. No wonder Kenneth R. Boulding, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, admitted, "Cosmology . . . is likely to be very insecure because it studies a very large universe with a small and biased sample."

2. The more scientists know, the more they realize that what they previously "knew" was wrong. Newton's laws were considered bedrock truths of physics till they were found inapplicable in the microscopic and the macroscopic realms. Quantum physics was developed to explain the atomic world, and relativistic physics for the cosmic. But they turned out to be violently contradictory. As both have to coexist at the origin of the universe—when the microscopic and the macroscopic were one—scientists had the formidable challenge of devising a Theory of Everything (ToE) to unify these irreconcilable pillars of science.

Let's review the history of the development of the ToE:

1. Initial vain roar. Physicist Leon Lederman: "We hope to explain the entire universe in a single, simple formula that you can wear on your T-shirt."

2. Subsequent exasperated grunt. Astrophysicist Steven Weinberg: "As we make progress understanding the expanding universe, the problem itself expands, so that the solution always seems to recede from us."

3. Final concealed whimper. Theoretical physicist John Wheeler: "Never run after a bus or woman or cosmological theory, because there'll always be another one in a few minutes."

Science Needs Grace

Going back to the pastime, the rope mother Yaśodā was trying to tie around Kṛṣṇa was only two fingers short. But the rope of ToE that science has been trying to tie around the universe is not only short but also broken, as Stephen Hawking confessed: "The theories [in physics] we have so far are both inconsistent and incomplete."

Mother Yaśodā did eventually succeed in tying Kṛṣṇa, but only when Kṛṣṇa, by His own grace, let Himself be bound. Similarly, science can understand the universe, especially our place and purpose within it, but only when it harmonizes with super intelligence by researching and applying the verifiable spiritual science delineated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* thus paving the way for spiritual revelation.

That's not as unscientific as it may sound. A scientist no lesser than the founder of quantum physics, Noble Laureate Max Planck, stated, "For religion, God is at the beginning; for science, God is at the end." And science has started reaching that end by its discovery of "fine tuning" of the universe: micro-precise adjustment of the values and interrelationships of at least eighty parameters essential for life. Obviously fine-tuning needs a fine-tuner. Of course, diehard devotees of atheism have proposed chance and multiple-universes, but these theories are all intrinsically unproven and unprovable. They fit better the realm of science fiction than science.

When scientists accept the verdict of their own evidence, they will remove the obstacle in a long-overdue spiritual leap of science. Lest they hesitate or falter in this bold step, renowned physicist Michael Faraday's reminder can urge them on: "We ought to value the privilege of knowing God's truth far beyond anything we can have in this world."

Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. His free cyber magazine, The Spiritual Scientist, *gives a scientific presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To subscribe, write to iyfpune@vsnl.com.*

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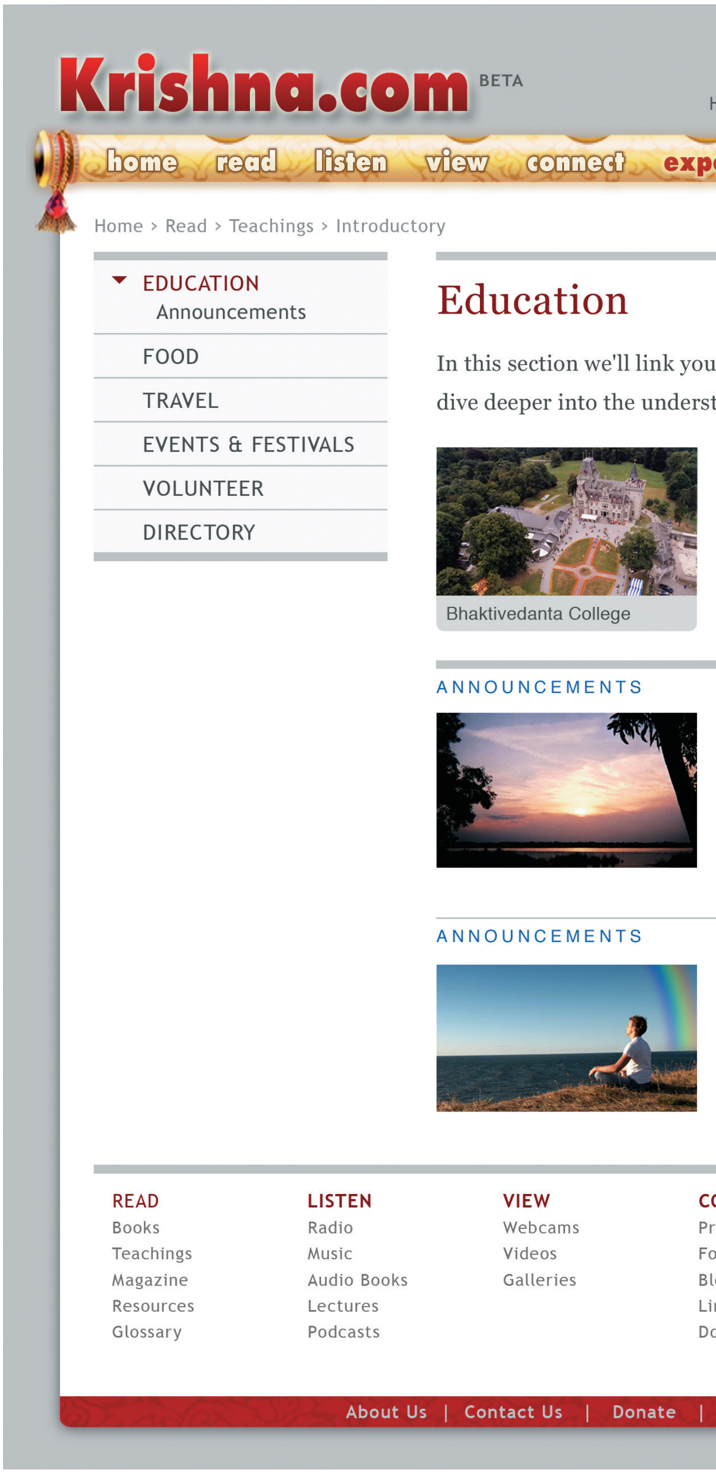

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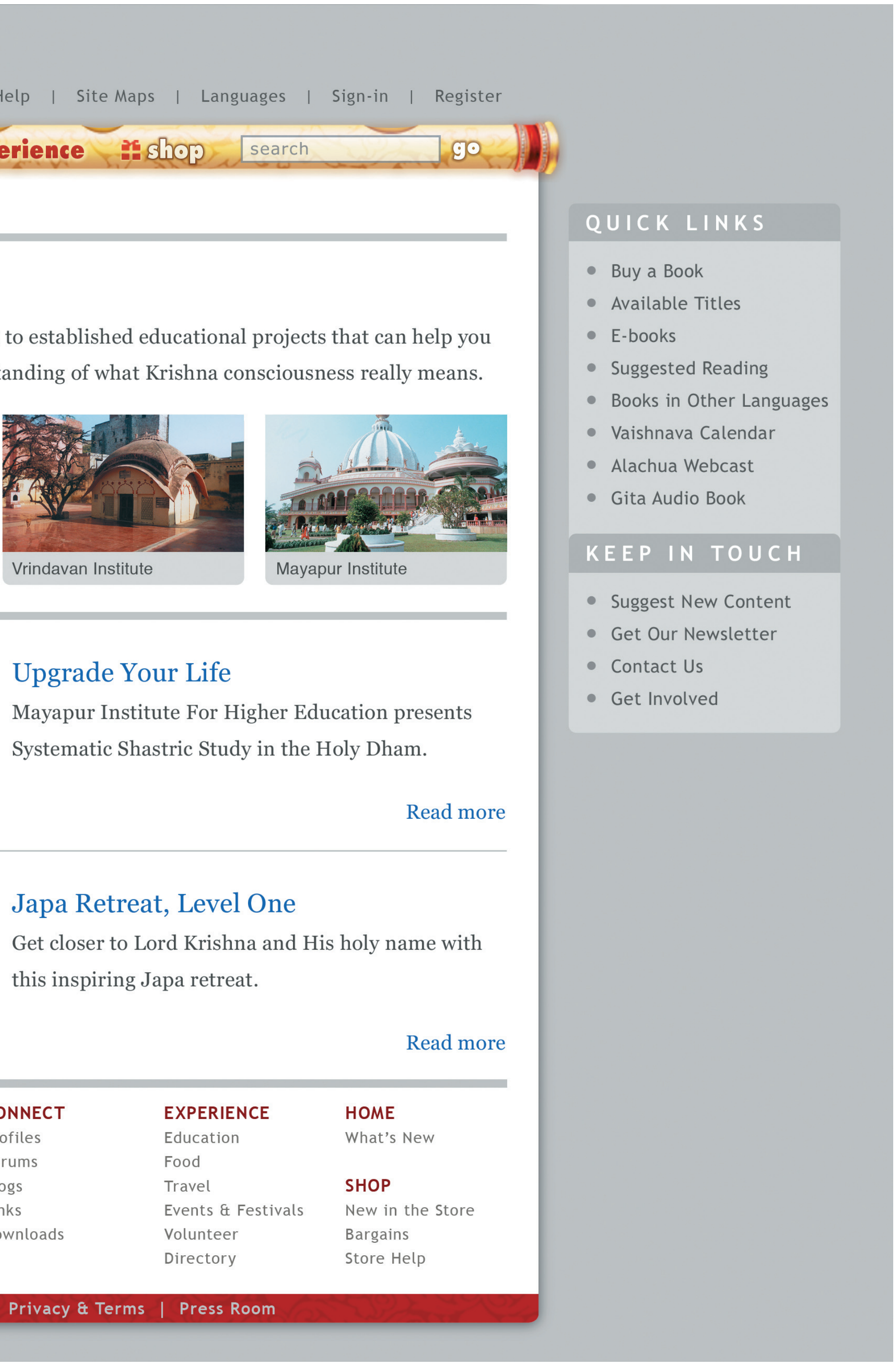

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In your own

What keeps you committed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

I am one of those kids whose parents

hate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, think the devotees are freaks, and do not bother to understand the philosophy. My dad is a butcher, which doesn't help. My best friend and fellow aspiring devotee is in the same situation: Our parents forbid us from doing anything religious, let alone Kṛṣṇa-related, so every time we go to temple it is very difficult. Yet once we are there, we could be sweeping the floor or cleaning the windows or peeling potatoes; it no longer matters. The material woes and pointless arguments dissolve away in Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy. Ever since our first visit over a year ago, our desire to return (and, I like to hope, our love for Kṛṣṇa) grows exponentially. No matter how much our parents mock us while at our respective houses, our home is always at the temple, doing service.

Dani C.
Chicago, Illinois

With so many distractions in my life,

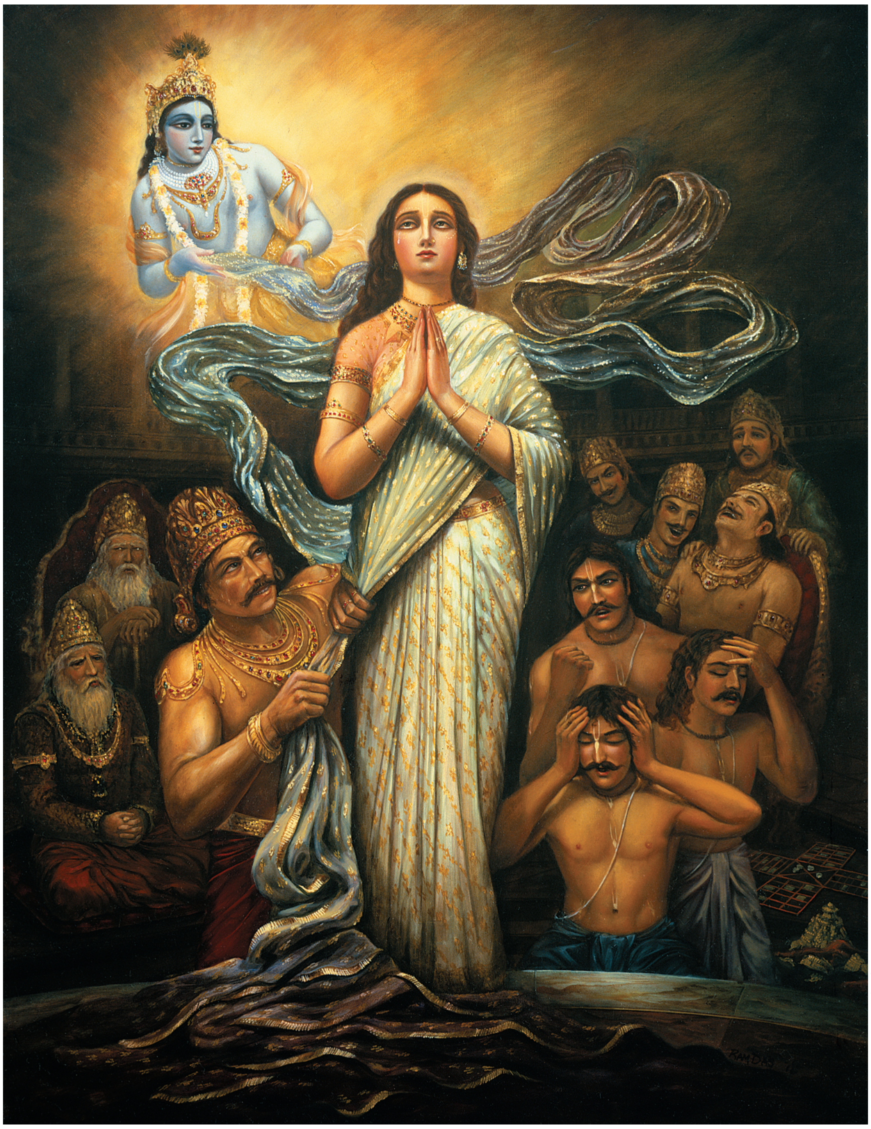
I am trying my best to fully commit to Lord Kṛṣṇa. My husband is really not interested in religion, so to keep peace within the family, I visit Krishna.com at work and say my chant early in the morning and before I go to bed. I feel that because of my situation I am not making the spiritual progress that I would like to make. In particular, I feel the lack of not being around devotees to receive the encouragement and support that is necessary for spiritual growth.

But there are many things that keep me on the path to Kṛṣṇa. Topmost is the *mahā-mantra;* once you've heard it, the song stays with you forever. And it helps just to know how merciful Kṛṣṇa is, how He is the source of all things, and how with His and Śrīla Prabhupāda's guidance, I will certainly progress.

Carol Tomlinson
Atlanta, Georgia

I often face challenges in my personal life,

such as family arguments and hindrances to my spiritual endeavors. I've also faced various health problems during the last five years, including malignant cancer,



When Kṛṣṇa's devotee Daupadī was being disrobed in a royal assembly, she called out in full surrender to Kṛṣṇa, who protected her chastity by supplying unlimited cloth.

Painting by Rāmanātha Dāsa

words . . .

Pentip photographer: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

burnout, and depression.

Whenever I need encouragement to go on, face these challenges, and keep my faith in Kṛṣṇa, I just remember Draupadī, and how her ultimate faith and devotion in Kṛṣṇa saved her from being disrobed in an open court. Draupadī's story always reminds me that in life we are ultimately alone with our challenges and suffering. It is only Kṛṣṇa who can come to our rescue, if we just turn to Him with complete faith.

When no one else understands my problems or appreciates my feelings, I am always assured that there is one person, Kṛṣṇa in my heart, who knows me through and through, better than I do myself. Whenever I feel discouraged, the thought of Kṛṣṇa's constant companionship gives me strength to stay committed to His service.

Sulochana Meyer-Rochow
Oulu, Finland

After interacting

with the ISKCON temple in Soho, London, last month and reading about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I have a clear goal set in my mind. I am a business student in my first year at the University of Bath. I face many challenges in my daily life. Firstly, all the other students drink and go clubbing. To be part of the group, you have to go clubbing too. My friends and I are among the rare few who do not go clubbing. We are not forced to do so, but socializing and making friends has become difficult. I have also lost almost all interest in rock music and other things. All I think about, listen to, and talk about is Kṛṣṇa. If I had the choice, I would do that 24/7. But I have to do it in private, in the confines of my room.

Still, Kṛṣṇa's wise words in the *Bhagavad-gītā* keep me on track. By His grace, I have understood the main goal of my life, and that I should concentrate on doing my work and continue to love Kṛṣṇa. No matter what obstacles come my way, Kṛṣṇa is always there to guide me.

Shweta Ramani
Bath, United Kingdom

As a teenager, I have an impressive list

of things that draw me away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. . . . But why do I keep going on?

The best and only answer I can give is Kṛṣṇa Himself. It's not that I'm not tempted; I've spent many dark hours torn between knowledge and desire. But in the end, it all comes down to Kṛṣṇa. The distractions of this world are powerful, there's no denying that. But they're so uninteresting compared to Kṛṣṇa.

And besides, I couldn't escape Kṛṣṇa if I tried—He's everywhere! I see His grace in all the people I meet, all the songs I hear seem to sing His praises, all the movies I watch have phrases that seem to refer to something He said or did. Let the world throw all its charms at me, because Kṛṣṇa always shows me that He is the true origin of them, and He keeps me committed to Him no matter what experience I go through.

Yash Eruan
Paris, France

Although involved for most of my life

in serving our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, I had also allowed myself to be overly distracted by the superficial material necessities of family life. Now that my sons have become adults, I've been again able to live within our temple community and have seen my spiritual life become totally renovated.

I've come to realize that my commitment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sustained mostly through this devotee association. Only by that special privilege can I keep nourishing my service connection to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Our deep conditioning to this material world, of busily forgetting who we really are as Kṛṣṇa's servants, can only be vanquished by the spiritual strength and fulfillment accessed through Vaiṣṇava association. Beyond the utter futility of material life, the association of devotees offers me the sheltering environment to more readily deepen my faith and attraction to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Gokulānanda Dāsa
Vancouver, Canada

Above all, it's the Deities,

and being able to serve Them, that keeps me here. I couldn't imagine Kṛṣṇa consciousness without the deity worship. For me, nothing compares to being able to dress Kṛṣṇa personally. And my attachment to this makes it easier to stay committed to other aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, such as chanting my rounds—I know that if I don't chant my rounds properly, I won't be able to concentrate on dressing Kṛṣṇa.

I am also glad to have technology, and Krishna.com, as it lets me have *darśana* with all the other deities

HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

What do you do to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness in your workplace?

Go to Krishna.com/inyourownwords and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in our Jan/Feb issue. Deadline for submissions is Oct 15.

around the world, as well as serving the deities in my local temple.

Mañjumedhā Devī Dāsī
Byron Bay, Australia

I've been a devotee since 1972,

and am now a science teacher at an inner-city school in Nottingham. There is much deprivation in the area, and the children can sometimes have serious behavior problems.

These job pressures can play havoc with my devotional schedule. However, all the children know that I am a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and this presents many opportunities to talk about my lifestyle. Amazingly, these normally rude and uncaring youths listen silently as I talk about vegetarianism, praying in the morning, my pilgrimages to India, and even my thoughts on creation. They eat *prasādam,* take *darśana* of the deities on my laptop screen, and are very protective of me.

One day while teaching sound, I played my *mṛdaṅga.* The pupils asked me to sing one of my songs, and clapped while I sang the *mahā-mantra.* To me, this is proof that Kṛṣṇa consciousness works, and it keeps me going even through the tough times.

Sailendriyā Devī Dāsī
Nottingham, United Kingdom

JAGANNĀTHA

(*continued from page 33*)

and He always reveals Himself through His pastimes in His divine abode of Vṛndāvana. May that Jagannātha Svāmī be the object of my vision."

The poetess Mādhavī-devī, the sister of Rāmānanda Rāya, writes in one of her songs: "The tender, sweet verses of *Śrī Gīta-govinda* bearing the name of Rādhā are woven into the *khandua* [pieces of cloth worn by Jagannātha each evening], which Lord Jagannātha holds close to His limbs."

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* explains that Kṛṣṇa came as Caitanya to understand Rādhārāṇī's mood. During Rathayātrā He danced in ecstasy in front of Lord Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa) to get His attention. In reply, Jagannātha consoled Him: "I never forgot any *gopīs* or *gopas,* and especially You, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. How can I forget You?"

Nārada Muni revealed to Gopakumāra in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.5.212–214): "Eternally as dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva as His beautiful Mathurā-dhāma is that Puruṣottama-kṣetra. There the Lord displays His supreme opulence and yet charms His devotees by acting like an ordinary person of the world. And if you are still not fully satisfied after going there and seeing Him, then at least stay there for some time as the means to achieve your desired goal. Of course, your ultimate goal is pure love for the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the divine *gopīs'* life and soul—love that follows the mood of the Lord's own Vraja-bhūmi. You seek no other goal than that." Love for Jagannātha is *kṛṣṇa-prema*, love of Kṛṣṇa, which is our ultimate goal. Kṛṣṇa has become available to everyone in the form of Jagannātha.

Since Lord Jagannātha is none other than Kṛṣṇa, His abode is equal to Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa performs His childhood pastimes. Jagannatha Puri—also called Puruṣottama-kṣetra, Śrī Kṣetra, and Nīlācala ("the place of the blue mountain")—contains all of Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes (*līlās*), although they may be hidden from material eyes. The *Vaiṣṇava-tantra* states, "Whatever *līlās* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are manifest in Gokula, Mathurā, and Dwaraka are all found in Nīlācala, Śrī Kṣetra."

By having the proper spiritual vision—eyes anointed by pure love of Godhead, *kṛṣṇa-premā*—one can see all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa there.

Jagannātha is no one else but the ecstatic manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, who appears in His most merciful form to help us go home, back to Godhead. Therefore, Prabhupāda has introduced the Jagannātha Rathayātrā in many cities around the world to uplift the conditioned souls from the spell of *māyā* (illusion). Let us take advantage of the occasion.

Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa holds a Master's degree in philosophy and religion and lives in New York City. His wife, Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī, graduated from Columbia University and co-authored this article.

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*The full list appears in the January/February and July/August issues, and is always available at Krishna.com, where the list also includes Krishna conscious gatherings.

Giving Humans Their Due

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL about human beings? Some people don't think so, and that makes other people nervous.

The idea that human beings are unique and intrinsically more valuable than other species is called exceptionalism. Western religious traditions generally consider that only human beings have souls and any real connection with God. Critics of this view argue that it has led to the exploitation of the natural world and to the environmental crises we now face.

Those who want to wipe out what they see as the anachronism of exceptionalism come from disparate worldviews. Bioethecists discount the granting of unique status to human beings as speciesism. To them, species bias is as bad as racial bias. Animal rights activists judge a living thing's worth by its ability to feel pain. To them, those who kill animals are baser than their victims. Deep ecologists see humans as inferior to other members of the natural world because only humans are killing the planet. To philosophical materialists, all species—humans, dogs, trees—are products of the same primordial soup, none with a justifiable claim to superiority.

Some theologians see in these views the seeds of the destruction of human morality. How can we expect people to behave if we propose that Jack is no different from jackrabbit? If there's nothing morally unique about human life, where do we draw the line on moral questions? Is a mentally challenged child equal to an animal and thus dispensable?

Any Kṛṣṇa devotee can contribute valuable insights to this discussion. As students of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures, we can see at once that both sides of the debate miss important points.

To me, the most obvious problem here is that each side is extreme. Just because human beings are exceptional doesn't mean that all other creatures are expendable. And just because the nonhuman species of the natural world are valuable and sentient and deserve some respect doesn't mean they're fully as valuable as human beings.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches us that wherever there is life—plant, animal, or human—a soul is present. So, yes, in one sense you and your dog are equals. But not entirely. Your Rottweiler can wrestle with you but not with the meaning of life. Philosophical inquiry is what sets human beings apart from the rest of nature. And that ability makes human life more valuable, and makes killing a human being the most morally reprehensible act.

But why should that imply that killing, torturing, or otherwise mistreating animals is justified? If you don't need to kill animals to live, why do it? The soul peering out at you from behind a cow's eyes is a soul just like you.

Western theologians argue that human exceptionalism is the only way to ensure the unique protection of human life. They fear that its demise will damage philanthropy and lead to morally offensive acts like euthanasia and eugenics (weeding out "misfits").

We disagree. All life is sacred. There's no reason to think that by affording protection and kindness to cows I'll withdraw it from humans. For us human beings to be truly exceptional, we must see things with the broad vision available to us in Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda

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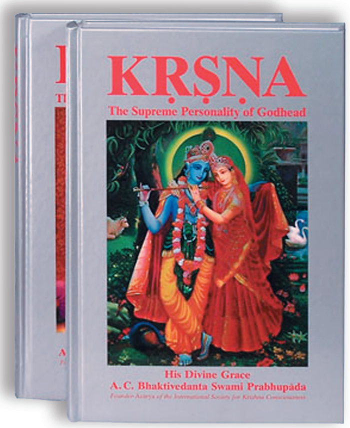
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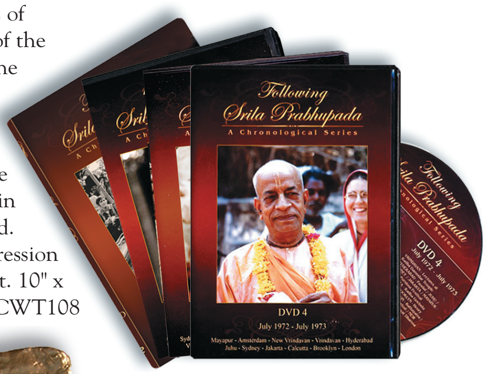
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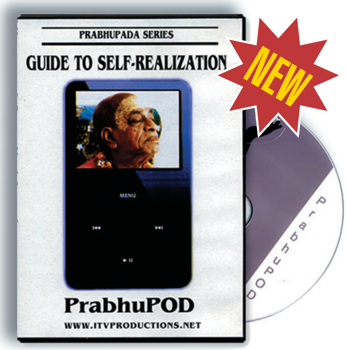
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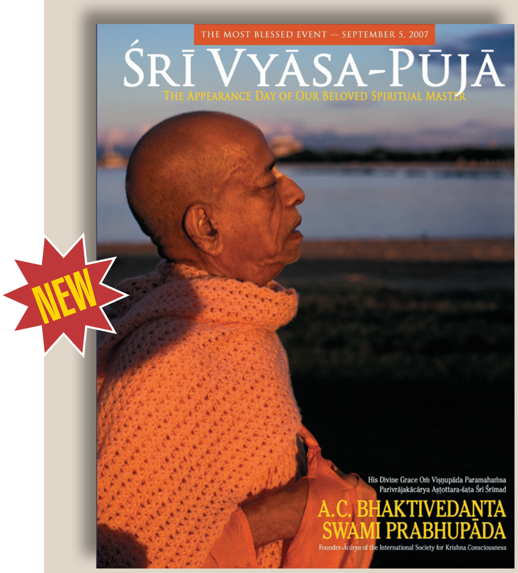
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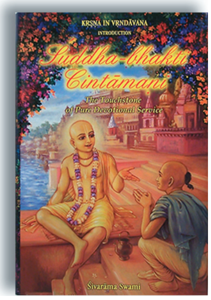
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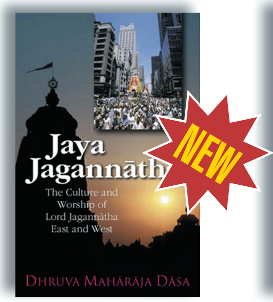
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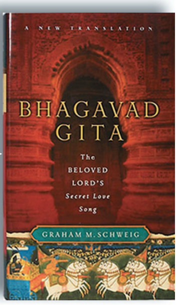
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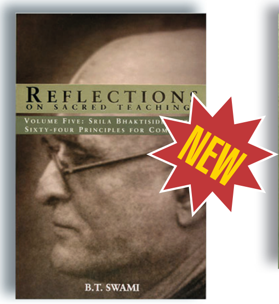
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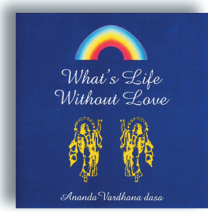
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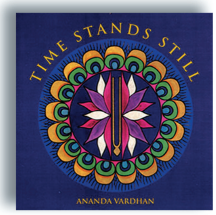
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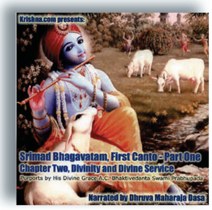
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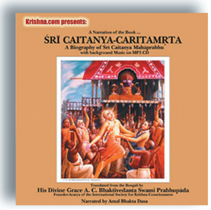
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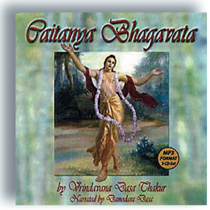
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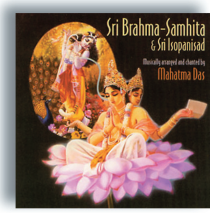
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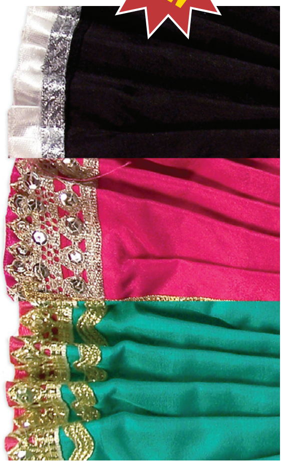

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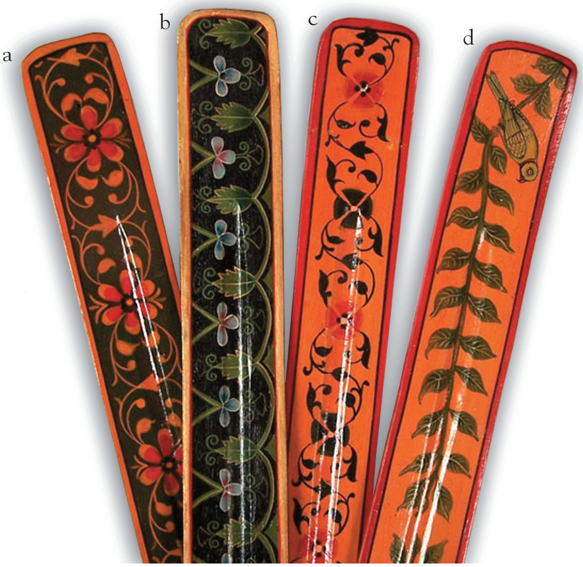

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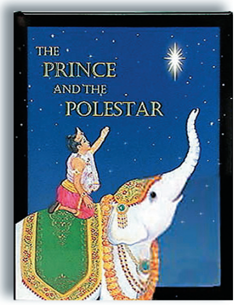

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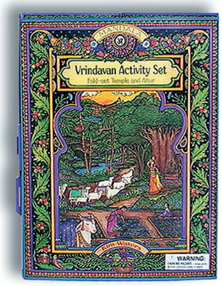

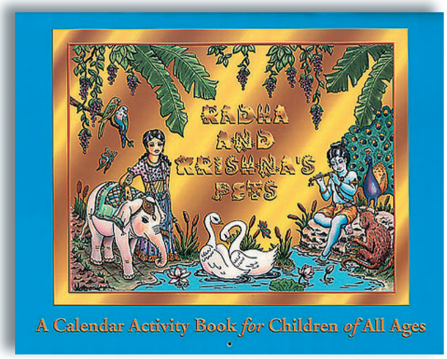

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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.22.17, Purport

By the nectar of His personal glance, the cloud known as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu poured water upon the garden of Gauḍa-deśa [Bengal] and revived the people, who were like creepers and plants burning in the forest fire of material existence.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 16.1

It is useless to argue over whether the Supreme Lord has no form or has a form. The Supreme Lord does not have a material form; He possesses a form that is transcendental, spiritual, full of knowledge and bliss, and beyond material perception. Only His devotees can approach His form.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Tattva-sūtra 4

Only the purified soul can attain the perfection of associating with the Personality of Godhead in complete bliss and satisfaction in his constitutional state. Whoever is able to renovate such devotional perfection is never again attracted by this material world, and he never returns.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.2.31

A pure devotee who is fully accomplished in the science of devotional service will never instruct a foolish person to engage in fruitive activities for material enjoyment, not to speak of helping him in such activities. Such a devotee is like an experienced physician, who never encourages a patient to eat food injurious to his health, even if the patient desires it.

Lord Viṣṇu
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.9.50

There is one goal of all disciplines, one highest attainment of all, the one potent means to bring the Supreme Lord under one's control. Only by the mercy of the Lord can it be gained. It is the rare, exclusive treasure of His devotees, a treasure rich with every sort of transcendental ecstasy and sweetness. Its wonderful glories are beyond the power to describe. That attainment is called *prema* [pure love for God]. It arises from special transformations of the functions of the mind.

Pippalāyana Ṛṣi
Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.103–105

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September 22:
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October 21:
Washington, D.C., Rāma Vijayotsava

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival dates with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held (see Centers, p. 59). Or e-mail Festival of India: madhuha@festivalofindia.org.

2005 Detroit Rathayātrā

FESTIVAL OF INDIA